

A  
M I S C E L L A N Y,

CONTAINING,

AMIDST A VARIETY OF OTHER MATTERS  
CURIOUS AND INTERESTING,

REMARKS ON BOSWELL'S JOHNSON;

WITH CONSIDERABLE ADDITIONS,

AND SOME NEW ANECDOTES OF THAT EXTRAORDINARY  
CHARACTER:

A CRITIQUE ON BÜRGER'S LEONORA;

IN WHICH SHE IS CLEARLY PROVED OF ENGLISH EXTRACTION,  
FROM AN OLD BALLAD STILL EXTANT; CONSEQUENTLY,  
IN ITS GERMAN DRESS, THE SUBJECT IS NEITHER  
NEW NOR ORIGINAL;

AND AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

ON THE

ART OF READING AND SPEAKING IN PUBLIC,

IN TWO PARTS.

---

BY S. WHYTE, AND HIS SON, E.-A. WHYTE.

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D U B L I N:

Printed by Robert Darchbank,

FOR THE EDITOR,

EDWARD-ATHENRY WHYTE, NO. 75, GRAFTON-STREET,  
OF WHOM IT MAY BE HAD, AND OF THE BOOKSELLERS.

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1799.

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- 

N. B. The Essay on the Art of Reading, having no absolute connexion with any other part of this Work, the Book-binder may place before or after the Remarks, &c. or do them up separately, at the Option of the purchaser.

## P R E F A C E.

THE REMARKS ON MR. BOSWELL'S LIFE OF DR. JOHNSON were, on their first publication, annexed as an APPENDIX to the Third Edition of WHYTE'S POEMS, for which they were originally drawn up, as referred to in the setting out; but, lest it might swell the volume to too great a bulk, many passages were omitted, which, tho' the form remains the same, are in this detached Edition restored, and a considerable portion of fresh matter occasionally introduced. Several Original Papers by way of farther Proof and Illustration, never before printed, are also given; which, it is imagined, will be a treat to the curious in literary history, and deemed, not improbably by many, the most interesting part of the work. The present performance, without any pretensions to rivalry, has a chance to be read by some who have not seen Mr. Boswell's volumes, and others, who have perused them, may not have them at hand; several passages are therefore cited verbatim, which might otherwise have been spared: the following extract from his preface is likewise given as a specimen of his manner, and as a key to certain passages and allusions in the course of the REMARKS, which, without it, might appear dissingenuous or obscure.

Thus then Mr. Boswell asserts his prerogatives, and denounces the tribe of objectors. . . . " I, at last, deliver to the world a Work which I have long  
b promised,

promised, and of which, I am afraid, too high expectations have been raised. The delay of its publication must be imputed, in a considerable degree, to the extraordinary zeal which has been shewn by distinguished persons in all quarters to supply me with additional information concerning its illustrious Subject; resembling in this the grateful tribes of ancient nations, of which every individual was eager to throw a stone upon the grave of a departed Hero, and thus to share in the pious office of erecting an honourable monument to his memory.

“ The labour and anxious attention with which I have collected and arranged the materials of which these volumes are composed, will hardly be conceived by those who read with careless facility. The stretch of mind, and prompt assiduity by which so many conversations were preserved, I myself, at some distance of time, contemplate with wonder; and I must be allowed to suggest, that the nature of the work, in other respects, as it consists of innumerable detached particulars, all which, even the most minute, I have spared no pains to ascertain with a scrupulous authenticity, has occasioned a degree of trouble far beyond that of any other species of composition. Were I to detail the books which I have consulted, and the inquiries which I have found it necessary to make by various channels, I should probably be thought ridiculously ostentatious. Let me only observe, as a specimen of my trouble, that I have sometimes been obliged to run half over London, in order to fix a date correctly; which, when I had accomplished,

I well



## P R E F A C E.

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I well knew, would obtain me no praise, though a failure would have been to my discredit. And after all, perhaps, hard as it may be, I shall not be surprized if omissions or mistakes be pointed out with invidious severity. I have also been extremely careful as to the exactness of my quotations; holding, that there is a respect due to the Publick which should oblige every Author to attend to this, and never to presume to introduce them with—‘ I think I have read,’—or—‘ If I remember right;’—when the originals may be examined.”

Advertisement to the first Edit. p. vii. viii. ix.

Again: “ It seems to me, in my moments of self-complacency, that this extensive biographical work, however inferior in its nature, may in one respect be assimilated to the ODYSSEY. Amidst a thousand entertaining and instructive episodes the HERO is never long out of sight; for they are all in some degree connected with him; and HE in the whole course of the History is exhibited by the Authour for the best advantage of his readers.

“ Should there be any cold-blooded and morose mortals who really dislike this Book, I will give them a story to apply. When the great Duke of Marlborough, accompanied by Lord Cadogan, was one day reconnoitering the army in Flanders, a heavy rain came on, and they both called for their cloaks. Lord Cadogan’s servant, a good humoured, alert lad, brought his Lordship’s in a minute. The Duke’s servant, a lazy, sulky dog, was so sluggish, that his Grace, being wet to the skin, reproved him, and had for

for answer, with a grunt, 'I came as fast as I could.' Upon which the Duke calmly said, 'Cadogan, I would not for a thousand pounds have that fellow's temper.'

Advertisement to second Edit. p. xv. xvi.

The honour of a Nation greatly depends on its literary characters; and, besides gratifying curiosity, it is of some importance, that the little which can generally be collected of their own lives, should be fairly and honestly reported. It is true, Johnson's are rare; and a Boswell, who could patiently act the humble servant, the best part of his life, for the purpose of furnishing the memoirs of an author by profession, is a phenomenon in literature; it is a felicity that all, who have deserved well of the Public, are not to expect. Their works will speak for themselves, and posterity will perhaps do justice to their merit; in other respects, they labour under peculiar disadvantages, and must abide the common fate. National prejudice, private pique, and the jealousy of contemporary wits may rudely assail them, and often, in direct proportion to their merit, they become objects of calumny and reproach; such a procedure, however common, neither promotes the interests of virtue, nor contributes to the happiness of society. It is the vice of little minds, and a scandal to the republic of letters. A great character, in worthy situations, is an object of virtuous contemplation; but that minuteness of Anecdote, that ostentatious display of trifles, which we sometimes meet with, is a vicious indulgence of inquisitive impertinence; a flagrant breach of private confidence,  
and

and an infringement of the rules of good breeding. 'Tis like intruding on the sacred privacy of beauty to expose her in ungracious situations. What is the world wiser or better for being told, that Semiramis loved a game at romps; that Alexander the Great had the hiccough; the Czar Peter on his travels took a pinch of snuff and sneezed; or that the Author of the Rambler paired his own nails, or performed any other of the petty offices common to his kind? \* Such puerilities might answer an end in the hands of honest Joe Miller, and serve as decorations to a jest-book; but are a disgrace to the pages of history, which should exhibit finished portraits of life for instruction, not a useless farago of caricatures.

The retailer of what are called good things treads on a slippery surface, and should do it with judgment and reserve. Wit, particularly of the colloquial kind, is a sort of mental electricity, sudden in its effect, and evanescent in its nature. Many things tell well enough in a private circle, where all are on the gape, prepared for the broad grin, and the prejudice in your favour; which, abstracted from local assimilations, cut but a sorry figure upon paper. Witness the numerous collections of repartees, and bon mots, from Seutonius's twelve Cæsars, to Boswell's Memoirs of Johnson inclusive. The sportive slippances of conversation, the little triumphs of petulance, or casual ebullitions of spleen, may pass for the moment, and, when the laugh is excited, have fully answered their end; but when indulged to the

\*prejudice

\* Vide Addenda, p. 49, (a) New Anecdotes of Johnson.

prejudice of a deserving member of society, and obtruded as historical designations of character, they shew a pitiful ambition in the fool that uses them, and, except to expose him, are unworthy of record. To apply Mr. Boswell's own story—"I would not for a thousand pounds have that fellow's temper."

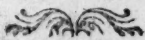
Whether Mr. Boswell comes properly within this description, every reader will determine for himself; but such were the reflections which occurred to the writer of these pages on perusal of that elaborate production. Of the very many eminent characters mentioned in the course of those volumes, there is scarcely one, but first or last, is presented in a disadvantageous light, and marked with some comparative draw-back, as a foil to heighten and set off the consequence of his illustrious friend. It was an unnecessary prostitution of applause; Dr. Johnson was sufficient in himself; admitting the facts, there would have been a merit in retrenchment. The shades of his own character, if not wholly concealed, might have been softened, and thrown into the background, without injury to any; his weaknesses could not be improved by comparisons, and his excellencies stood in no need of such invidious support. *De mortuis nihil nisi bonum*, says the adage; Dr. Johnson's reading, *De mortuis nihil nisi verum*, is not clearly an amendment; *bonum* implies *verum*. Biographers are not upon their oath, and if in nothing but the truth is to be understood the whole truth, it involves an impossibility; for the truth *in toto* can never be obtained;



obtained ; and after all, if the whole truth were within compass, a great part would be nugatory and ridiculous ; the straining after which is but a vain prodigality of time, and an affected parade of impartiality to no end. We have proofs and precedents enow constantly before us, and need no monitor to shew what little things are great men.

Mr. Boswell's *Life of Johnson* derives importance from the subject, and has been generally read ; on the same account it will find its way into the repositories of learning. We envy not his honours, and only wish he had pruned away certain morbid excrescencies, and, with a little more circumspection, made choice of his ground ; it would have been more of a piece with his pompous declarations, and precluded the necessity of an antidote, consequently the present attempt.

The writer of these sheets is conscious he has need of many apologies ; but his intentions are pure ; he seeks not to tear the well-earned laurels from the brows of any man ; it would be an idle conceit, equally illiberal and absurd. His only aim is to set in a proper point of view, and do justice to, what he conceives, an injured character ; the character of a good man, which he cannot suppose in any light to be properly a subject of obloquy or contempt. He for a time hoped he should have been spared the friendly office, and has to regret it was not taken up by abler hands.



*PREPARING FOR THE PRESS,*  
A NEW EDITION  
OF  
P O E M S  
ON  
VARIOUS SUBJECTS,  
*ORNAMENTED WITH PLATES,*  
AND ILLUSTRATED WITH  
NOTES, ORIGINAL LETTERS, AND CURIOUS  
INCIDENTAL ANECDOTES.

IN THE COURSE OF WHICH,  
THE PRETENDED MIRACLES OF VESPASIAN ARE  
EXAMINED AND DETECTED.

---

BY SAMUEL WHYTE.

---

THE FOURTH EDITION,  
CAREFULLY COLLATED WITH THE AUTHOR'S LAST IMPROVED  
MANUSCRIPT,  
BY EDWARD-ATHENRY WHYTE, F. C. T. C. D.

# R E M A R K S

## O N

### B O S W E L L ' S J O H N S O N .

—DAMNS WITH FAINT PRAISE.

POPE.

UPON a careful revifal of the preceding fheets, previous to publication, the Editor was led by fome circumftances occafionally mentioned to confult Boswell's Life of Dr. Johnson,\* particularly the paffages refpecting the late Mr. Sheridan; and could not help obferving, that an unprejudiced Reader, judging of its accuracy and impartiality from thofe fpecimens which are pretty copious, would hardly be inclined to think very advantageoufly of that multifarious production. Facts, where facts are reforted to, glaringly perverted; commendation fneakingly and invidioufly beftowed; ill-natured ftrictures unneceffarily, as they are on moft occafions unwarrantably, introduced; and frequent contradictions, as to Mr. Sheridan, are its predominant chara<sup>ter</sup>ifticks. Our Author, has in one ftriking inftance taken the task of refcuing his Friend's reputation from wanton and unmerited obloquy upon himfelf.† And the Editor, with deference prefumes, that the moft fanguine of the Doctor's and his Biographer's admirers will not be difpleafed, upon the principles of equity to the living as well as the dead, to fee a curfory investigation of the reft impartially attempted. Some may think it a fubject of little importance; the lovers of truth and literature may poffibly entertain a different opinion. The lovers of literature will think that the

B annals

\* Or rather Boswell's own life under the umbrage of Johnson's. . . . 3 vols. 8vo. 2d edit. London, 1793.—Vol. i. p. 341, paffim.—The firft edit. which bears date April 20, Anno 1791, was in quarto.

† See the real History of the Gold Medal given to the Author of the Tragedy of Douglas, WHYTE'S POEMS publifhed by the Author, (in the EXTRACTS inferted for convenience, at the end of the work) page lxi. likewife p. lv. *ibid*.

annals of literature should be preserved pure; and what was an object in the Life of Johnson,—or why else introduced?—cannot be indifferent to the admirers of candour and truth.

Boswell says,\* “when I returned to London in the year 1762, to my surprise and regret, I found an irreconcilable difference had taken place between Johnson and Sheridan. A pension of two hundred pounds a year had been given to Sheridan. Johnson, who thought slightly of Sheridan’s Art, upon hearing that He was also pensioned, exclaimed, “What! have they given HIM a pension? then it is time to give up mine.”—Sheridan might have retorted in the language of Jaffier, *’tis to me you owe it.*—Boswell attempts to palliate, though not wholly to justify, that unprovoked folly; and, leaving his readers under whatever impression to their reflections, after an unnecessary detail of extraneous circumstances, at the end of two pages he tells us—“Johnson complained that a man who disliked him, repeated this sarcasm to Sheridan, without telling him what followed, which was, that after a pause he added,” . . . . “However, I am glad that Mr. Sheridan has a pension, for he is a very good man.” “Sheridan,” continues Boswell, “could never forgive this hasty contemptuous expression; it rankled in his mind; and though I informed him what Johnson had said, and that he would be very glad to meet him amicably, he positively declined repeated offers which I made, and once went off abruptly from a house where he and I were engaged

\* See Boswell, vol. i. p. 343, 4. Johnson was the avowed enemy of Scotland and Scotchmen, and no friend to the Stage; yet he wrote a play, and whimsical to think, “the ease and independance to which he at last attained by Royal munificence,” [p. 447,] he owed, it seems, to Scotch Actors, who played for his Benefit, under the Management of an Irish Prompter; for Lord Loughborough himself acknowledges, rather superciliously, “Sheridan rang the bell:” and, to carry on the metaphor, when the performance was over, the panegyrist of Auchinleck comes in for his share with the life of Johnson, in three ponderous quartos, by way of Epilogue.—The first edition is in this instance referred to.



engaged to dine, because he was told that Dr. Johnson was to be there\* . . . . I could perceive that Mr. Sheridan was by no means satisfied with Johnson's acknowledging him to be a good man. That could not sooth his injured vanity. I could not but smile, at the same time that I was offended, to observe, Sheridan, in the *Life of Swift* which he afterwards published, attempting, in the writhings of his resentment, to depreciate Johnson, by characterizing him, as, . . . "a Writer of gigantic fame in these days of little men." . . . . Mr. Boswell was offended! poor Gentleman! . . . . and look ye, Sirs! he was tickled withal, and he smiled! or peradventure *in the writhings of his Resentment*, more appositely to give it, in the picturesque Language of Milton, he 'grinned horrible a ghastly smile.' But in the event of this antithetical crisis, still true to his text, not an iota escapes him of Sheridan's Provocations. . . . Had Messrs. Boswell and Co. an exclusive patent for offence? . . . Dr. Johnson had previously attacked Sheridan's friend Swift, and in the moody spirit of detraction he contemptuously treats him as a writer; he reprobates him as a man, and, in order to level him with the lowest of the species, he brands that very Swift, a Clergyman, a Dignitary of his own Church, the Dean of St. Patrick's, with folly in the extreme; prevarication, which is lying of the worst kind, and cowardice.† These are the odious stigmas which Dr. Johnson avowedly labours to attach to the character of an eminent Divine; for his abilities looked up to by the Great, and for his unexampled charity and conduct in his pastoral calling, by the lower orders of the community, where his memory is yet held in reverence, almost adored. What writer but the encomiast of Savage could dirty his pages with such foul-mouthed aspersions? Swift perhaps had his particularities; but was Dr. Johnson the man to throw the first stone? He  
perhaps

\* This vexatious Dinner-Party is brought again upon the tapis, vol. iii. p. 594. † See Johnson's *Poets* and Sheridan's *Swift*, p. 449, &c.

perhaps was remiss in his court to the Doctor's arrogated superiority;\* he perhaps might aspire to equality, and equality in the vocabulary of vanity implies rivalry. The world cannot contain two Suns. What, Swift! the Vicar of Laracor! was HE a Sun? Nay, Sir! that was enough, more than enough to rouse 'the constitutional indolence of Johnson,' to seize every opportunity of unsphering him. His common expression in talking of him was, "That Swift was a very shallow fellow." Could any ordinary acquaintance, much less a friend, endeared to him from infancy and bound to him by unremitting offices of kindness, stand by and tacitly authorize such malevolent calumnies by passing them unnoticed? Sheridan could not, and for that he is traduced! The Rambler, a valuable periodical paper, contains many splendid declamations on morality, and the author, under that description, his Biographer holds forth as the Mirrour of Truth; but another writer, who was no slave to prejudice, and in his own person little prone to 'the thundering tongue of faucy and audacious eloquence,' has left a few unvarnished lines, that shew him not unversed in the science of life, by which that profound master of Ethics, without disparagement to his talents or blemish to his memory, might have profited; and his lectures would not have been the worse attended to. Boswell was possibly too much engrossed in his lucubrations, recollecting and minuting down the day's eventful history, to read such flimsy rhapsodies as Othello, or possibly never *soberly* considered, except when the Firm† were to come in for snacks, that

Good

\* See Boswell, 2d edit. as before, vol. i. pp. 108, 416, 522, vol. ii. p. 103, and vol. iii. p. 310, where Sheridan's opinion of Johnson's implacable resentment against Swift is also noticed; and I have myself often heard the cause so assigned, asserted as an established truth.

† Firm. . . . a Term in commercial usage, implying the ostensible head, proprietor or proprietors of banks, and mercantile houses, who sometimes find

Good name in man and woman  
 Is the immediate jewel of their souls.  
 Who steals my purse, steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;  
 'Twas mine; 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;  
 But he, that filches from me my good name,  
 Robs me of that which not enriches him,  
 And makes me poor indeed.

SHAKESP.

But the traducing of Sheridan was not the only object. Mr. Boswell had other irons in the embers, and we shall presently see more is meant than meets the ear. His own character, a little more attentively scrutinized, may help us to develop the mystery; let us decypher it. Pope, who had also some knowledge of mankind, affords us a criterion:

Search then the ruling passion; there alone  
 The wild are constant and the cunning known;  
 That clue once found unravels all the rest,  
 The prospect clears and Wharton stands confess'd, &c.

For Wharton read Boswell; his ruling passion was the lust of a niche among the literati. Without entering into a particular examen of his pretensions, he was calculated to move in a secondary orbit and wanted conspicuity. From his youth up he was troubled with an incurable and dangerous malady; by professor Juvenal, an acknowledged adept, termed *Cacoëthes Scribendi*.\* Being of a communicative turn; redundantly loquacious and a confirmed egotist, the minutiae of anecdote and biographic detail, requiring no extraordinary degree of invention, and depending more on memory than genius, suited his talents;

and it good policy to admit a nominal partner to a small dividend on the profits, without any accession to the capital, which so circumstanced stands in the name of the Firm, as it might be Johnson and Co. . . . The word in this acceptation is not in our copy of the Dictionary.

\* . . . . . Tenet insanabile multos

Scribendi cacoëthes, et ægro in corde senescit.

The curse of writing is an endless itch.

Juv. Sat. vii. v. 53.

DRYDEN.

talents; and so intoxicated was he with the vanity of ranking as an author, that ere the tonfor had well cleared the down from his new-reaped chin\* he tore himself from his mother's apron strings, and made a journey of some hundreds of leagues by land and by water in quest of a subject. Such was his diffidence, and the distrust he entertained of his powers! A defect, which some hereditary strength of nerves, and a little experience in life, enabled him to get the better of; as by the tenour of his writings is demonstrated. . . . We do not perceive any very uncommon marks of originality in his exuberant and ponderous journals to entitle him to the envied distinction he aimed at; but the lucky choice of a subject is of the first importance to an author, and so far we believe him in the secret. In the way of attraction the celebrity of the subject is not unfrequently as much looked to as the merits of the performance, of which all readers cannot be supposed competent judges. For instance, not to degrade our Biographer by comparison,† Homer is perhaps as much indebted to Troy as Troy is to Homer, who, as well as Mr. Boswell, as the criticks will have it, sometimes nods. However, without any temptation of friendship to praise or to abuse him, we must give our author (as he now ranks) credit for his journey. The complexion of affairs abroad was inviting; Corsica was struggling for her liberties under the auspices of her brave patriotic General, a second Cato! The world had all its eyes on Paoli; his life was a desideratum; Mr. Boswell was on the spot; by Mr. Boswell it was written, and, till curiosity fell asleep, undeniably it was read: Fame and profit went hand

\* Quo tondente gravis juveni mihi barba sonabat.

Juv. Sat. i. v. 25, & Sat. x. v. 226.

† The application is not unfounded: vide Preface to Johnson's Life, p. xv. Be not astonished, gentle Reader! There may you see the ingenious Author of that extensive Biographical Work, in his moments of self-complacency, by assimilation, claiming kindred with the venerable Ancient. If haply some future Pope should *do it into Verse*, our master of Affleck [as the name is pronounced] will have both rhyme and reason to be vain.



hand in hand; an enviable denouement for a first attempt; and a flattering earnest of future success.

His next speculation lay nearer home, and London was the scene of operation; an ample field for enterprize, and a soil not ungenial to oddities. He had tried his powers, and now was the time to improve upon his System. By lucky construction, *Noscitur a Sociis*, was an adage in his favour. He frequented the societies of wits, and enlisted, as was his bent, in the train of singular characters; none more singular than the extraordinary man, to whom at last he contrived to get himself introduced, for the purpose of shewing him off in all his attitudes, and gratifying the world with his Memoirs; in every point of view a heavy and laborious task; but what will not a man do to be for ever known? \* The patriarch Jacob, not irreverently to speak, served Laban two apprenticeships for a wife; our obsequious Biographer served Dr. Johnson three, a more imperious slave-driver, for a feather. † Now, *the prospect clears and Boswell stands confess'd*. He had to wriggle himself into the good graces of Johnson; to accumulate matter and to make a Book; to ensure notoriety and pocket the emolument. Freedom of opinion and liberty of speech; the obligations of friendship and the ties of kindred must give way; even his dear country falls a sacrifice to the caprice and prejudices of his Idol. Mr. Boswell, with his usual address, anticipates the charge,

\* See Cowley's Works—the Sentiment is his.

† In the Summer of 1761, Mr. Boswell tells us Mr. Sheridan read Lectures on the English Language, &c. in Edinburgh, at which time his acquaintance with him commenced; and his acquaintance with Dr. Johnson, Anno. 1763. See vol. i. p. 343. Thus speaks he for himself. "This is to me a memorable year; for in it I had the happiness to obtain the acquaintance of that extraordinary man whose memoirs I am now writing: an acquaintance which I shall ever esteem as one of the most fortunate circumstances of my life."—N. B. His Work had been anticipated by three or four competent Biographers, whom, in his way, he very cordially bespatters.

charge, and affects to despise the imputation.\* But, maugre all his finesses, if Mr. Boswell, at the shrine of the venerated sage, did not bewray his own nest, no two-legged animal, since Adam to save appearances used the fig-leaf, ever did. *Cedite Romani scriptores, cedite Graii.* Mr. Boswell full of the inspiring god, and prostrate at the feet of his divinity, uncorks the incense-vase of adulation;† himself the high priest officiates at the altar of his own rearing; and, it is a rule without an exception, all things, animate and inanimate, must bow down to Baal. Sheridan, who never abused Scotland, and had confessedly rendered him many acceptable kindnesses, was the first victim. A misunderstanding subsisted between Johnson and Sheridan; it could not be kept a secret; Boswell perceived it, and like a keen-eyed politician takes advantage of the hint. To say nothing of the private uses he made of it in paying his devoirs *tete-a-tete*, the passage before us is a master-stroke in its way; every thing that might bear hard upon Johnson is extenuated; every thing that could make against Sheridan is pressed forward and dilated; not satisfied with an orderly and connected statement of facts, which is the great merit of a historian, like a true partizan, he beats abroad for matter, and in defiance of all chronological arrangement, to which in other cases he fastidiously confines his narrative, he forestalls the succession of events; resorts to widely distant periods, and dwells on topics wholly irrelative to the affair in hand; an artful manoeuvre to conceal his real views, by which ‘those who read with careless facility,’ a numerous class, are imposed on. The attention is called off, and diverted to new objects, and the original cause of difference, embarrassed with foreign circumstances, is thrown into shade and lost sight of. Thus craftily shifting his ground, the odium of commencing hostilities is transferred to Sheridan, and by  
a studied

\* See Boswell as before, vol. i. p. 350 *passim*.

† *Incense-vase* of adulation, alias his Ink-horn.

a studied latitude of phraseology an insinuation is conveyed, that he, Boswell the *smiler*, had actually seen in manuscript the obnoxious paragraph referred to in Sheridan's Life of Swift, which, as he says, was afterwards published; meaning, as he would have it understood, at a very short interval; though not a line of it was then, or for full twenty years afterwards, committed to paper. By this curious pretext a prejudice is created in favour of his maligner, consequently operating to the disadvantage of the character injured, whenever his name occurs, which is by no means seldom, in the remainder of that and the two succeeding volumes. Having thus settled the preliminaries and adjusted matters to his satisfaction, in the overflowings of self-complacency our Biographer, to take it as before on his own report, *smiled*, and incontinently proceeds—

"This rupture with Sheridan deprived Johnson of one of his most agreeable resources for amusement in his lonely evenings; for Sheridan's well-informed, animated, and bustling mind never suffered conversation to stagnate; and Mrs. Sheridan was a most agreeable companion to an intellectual man. She was sensible, ingenious, unassuming, yet communicative. I recollect, with satisfaction, many pleasing hours which I passed with her, under the hospitable roof of her husband, who was to me a very kind friend." \* . . . Mr. Boswell, for the purpose of quitting scores with his

C

very

\* The remaining part of the paragraph must not be omitted. . . .  
 "Her Novel, entitled MEMOIRS OF Miss SIDNEY BIDDULPH, contains an excellent moral, while it inculcates a future state of retribution, and what it teaches is impressed upon the mind by a series  
 "of as deep distresses as can affect humanity, in the amiable and pious  
 "Heroine, who goes to her grave unrelieved, but resigned, and full  
 "of hope of Heaven's mercy.—Johnson paid her the highest compliment  
 "upon it: *I know not, Madam! that you have a right, upon moral*  
*"principles, to make your Readers suffer so much."* Boswell's Johnson,  
 vol. i. p. 353, 4.

very kind friend, has him again in the same volume thus . . . " Talking of a barrister who had a bad utterance, some " one, to rouse Johnson, wickedly said, that he was unfortunate in not having been taught oratory by Sheridan; "\* and then commits him to the laceration of Johnson and Garrick, which he glosses with the subsequent defence:

" I should perhaps have suppressed this disquisition concerning a person of whose merit and worth I think with respect, had he not attacked Johnson so outrageously in his *Life of Swift*, and at the same time, treated us, his admirers, as a set of pigmies. He who has provoked the lash of wit, cannot complain that he smarts from it." †

Alas, poor Yorick! 'tis true he could not complain; for he was sleeping in peace with his fathers before those notable animadversions saw the light ‡. . . Let us now fairly examine the premises. . . . *Ecce iterum Crispinus!* . . . Sheridan's *Life of Swift* again prematurely pressed into the service! . . . Is not this something like writhing? . . . several years back, according to the manifestation of events, he had us upon the same ground; he confessed himself offended; but he rode his hobby in a pretty decent ambling pace, and smiled. But behold, when we thought the business quite over and forgotten, he takes us at a short turn, and we find him mounted again. . . . No offence I hope; yes, by St. Patrick (an Irish oath) but there is, and much offence too;

That trot became a gallop soon  
Which gall'd him in his seat.

He

\* Johnson, in reply . . . . " Nay, Sir! if he had been taught by " Sheridan, he would have cleared the room." Vol. i. p. 543. † Ibid.

‡ Sheridan died at Margate in Kent, August the 16th, 1788. . . . . Boswell's book did not appear till about three years after, as we may collect from the date of his dedication, April 20th 1791, which was full seven years subsequent to Sheridan's *Life of Swift*, first published in 1784.



He winces, gentle reader! you see he winces! do but observe his contortions! John Gilpin, sir! was a stoick to him—Softly, softly, good Mr. Boswell! tho' anxious enough to conceal your chagrin, you veritably take the matter too heinously. Vanity and prejudice apart, what might Posterity say to your strictures? they might say, here is a strong dash of prejudice, malevolence, crimination and abuse. . . . But where is the wit? We have Mr. Boswell's word for it, and that is conclusive; for what observer of less consummate sagacity could have made the discovery? and what scholiast of less consummate acumen could have conceived, in that same luminous sally, any reference to a work, which was then a nonentity in the archives of literature? What a loss to the nation in these perilous times HE was not Prime Minister! . . . Seriously, the lash, is a smart metaphorical conceit, though in our humble apprehension somewhat awkwardly and ambiguously brought in. . . . The lash! ay! the lash of wit; indeed, as one may say, a very pretty figure; in very admirable hands, and very cavalierly exercised; exercised by the said Mr. Boswell! Does the said Mr. Boswell apply it as a principal, or merely as a proxy? saving his modesty we rather think the latter; be that as it may, Sheridan, the reprobrated writer of Swift's Life, was not the aggressor; and supposing him amenable, the correction, as before hinted, for we are compelled to reiterate, was inflicted by anticipation. The provocation alledged was not even in embryo. The effect cannot precede its cause, and, at the date of the conversation referred to, his employers, the booksellers, had not even suggested to Johnson the expediency of the Lives of the Poets containing his libel upon Swift, which Sheridan in the course of his subsequent account of his friend and godfather incidentally takes up.

The

The occasion offered; it was not sought.\* But what of that, the great subject of the memoirs, Mr. Boswell was then writing, is the momentous consideration, and at all events must be supported; it behoved no less the wren on the eagle's wing to have an eye to his own situation. Under such impressions, it is not to be wondered at, that every nice offence of Sheridan's is exaggerated; set in a notebook, learned and conned by rote to cast into his teeth; while the gross scurrilities of the man who daily enjoyed so many hours of needful amusement under his hospitable roof are selected for admiration, and exhibited with eclat. Fortunately ours is the age of reason; the volume of nature, in legible characters lies open to inspection, where all men, no doubt equally competent, are readers. Hypotheses are framed, and to shew their proficiency, or haply to escape the lash of wit, every absurdity has its advocate. . . . Johnson, and his satellite, Boswell, are arraigned; if any man should cavil at our defence of the illustrious pair, we deprecate his censure, and plead prescription and the fashion of the times.

In the affair under consideration, though neither the justice or candour of the parties be conspicuous, on the principles of our new philosophy, the literary despot may be cleared of imputation, and the supposed anachronisms of his biographer may be reconciled. . . . Dr. Johnson paid a visit to the Highlands, an incident that cannot be indifferent to our brethren of the North; there, as we may well presume, in the manner of one of our modern illuminati, or more opportunely from his trusty Achates, 'his humble attendant,' as he modestly styles himself, who was native there, the sage acquired the mysterious faculty of SECOND

SIGHT,

\* The disquisition concerning Sheridan, vindictively brought forward by Boswell, he dates Ann. 1769. Johnson's Critique on the Life and Writings of Swift, in his Account of the Poets, first appeared in 1779. . . . Sheridan's Account of Swift not 'till 1784.—See the Work, p. 449, &c.

SIGHT,\* and looking into the seeds of time, saw himself in a book to be written some fifteen or twenty years to come, ycleped 'a writer of gigantic fame.' This, on the incontestible authority of a grave historian, an eye witness of the fact, who, as we may well presume, had no temptation to lying, his patron being dead and unable to pay for it; the historian himself remarkable for the same rare faculty of prescience, and so free from any partiality to Johnson, that he has even been accused of drawing him into very unfavourable situations, for the important end of swelling his Diary; † this characteristic expression, 'a writer of gigantic fame,' I say on the authority aforesaid, was an outrageous and unpardonable attack, which it was incumbent on a genius of the sage's athletic importance to repel. Corporeal notice, as meditated against the reprobated translator of Ossian, might induce unfavourable constructions, and be attended with disagreeable consequences; possibly inconvenient withal. ‡ In the instant of deliberation things suddenly took a new turn; Minerva, in the shape of the master of Auchenleck, claps my philosopher on the back, and suggests a sure and safer expedient, which was, in the fashionable phrase of modern heroism, § to reserve his fire and pay the fatirical

\* SECOND SIGHT. See Boswell, vol. i. p. 472, vol. ii. pp. 5, 203.

† Some fastidious commentator, versed in obsolete lore, fifteen or twenty centuries hence, may be tempted to assert, that in this passage our author had his eye on that impartial writer David Hume, who in such wise characterizes his admired fellow-labourer, Tacitus. The same Tacitus who announceth certain native burghers in the German Sea; "many men, many women, and many children," such, as 'twas averred, could write the Poems of Ossian, that hugely dismayed the Roman cohorts: He also telleth of certain northern tribes wont to hear the hissing of the waves when the Sun gets out of bed in a morning, and, on leading his nags from the stable, make a leg and wish him a good journey!!!!

‡ Boswell, vol. ii. p. 171. See this hint taken up and somewhat elucidated in the Appendix hereto subjoined. No. 1.

§ Duelling, here alluded to, is a weed of the feudal ages; the spurious offspring of chivalry, and utterly unknown in the times when Minerva was in repute.



satirical knave in his own coin. He accedes to the admonition of the goddess, and in terrorem leaves in the hands of his ingenious biographer, a squib; to be kept in petto till the season meet for wreaking his revenge.

On this presumption, so agreeable to reason and truth, the affair is naturally accounted for, and the Doctor clearly exculpated; nor can any just exception possibly lie to the position, save that in some respects it impugns the notion of co-partnership, and tends to despoil Mr. Boswell of the prerogative of wit. However to accommodate matters the best we can, as the gentleman, it is by this time pretty well understood, is no enemy to celebrity at second hand, the last, we admit, is of his own manufacture, and without fraud or contest decidedly his due; yet still a doubt remains that he never would have thought of it, if Johnson had not lent him a spur.

The wit, a precious Morceau! which so forcibly marks his hero's penetration, magnanimity, and liberality of mind, that faithful historian confesses he would have suppressed, but that Sheridan, naughty man! called him pigmy; and, after seven years dreaming on the atrocious scroll, like the fretful porcupine, he bristles up his poisoned quills against the person whose worth and merit he affects to think of with respect, and darts them at his shroud. Pity! that in the paroxysm of his fury he overshot the mark, and back the devilish engine recoils upon himself. The hour of attack approaches; he appeals to the high tribunal of the public; his plea is over-ruled; there is a small flaw in the indictment; the action will not lie; culprit did not attack the illustrious sage; the illustrious sage was the assailant; Sheridan only traversed the record and took up the gauntlet for his friend Swift, when his friend's mouth

was



was stopped and could not do justice to himself. Culprit did not call Mr. Boswell pigmy; pigmy is not in the scroll; the passages we have collated, and however suitable the term, the adoption of it is his own. Sheridan makes no invidious comparisons: singles out no particular object; but in the way of contrast by corporal allusion, speaking of the junto, contents himself with saying "Little Men" . . . . *Qui capit ille facit* . . . sure Mr. Boswell is not a *little* writer; why of all mankind should he take it to himself? and why at that particular juncture should it gall him? Now, on the subject of Swift, compare Johnson and Sheridan, and say to whom justly appertains the epithet outrageous.\*

The disquisition mentioned took place, if *bona fide* it did take place, in 1769. Sheridan's Life of Swift did not appear till 1784, which was the first and only instance of his writhing, if writhing Mr. Boswell will have it; but, from what has been proved, it is pretty plain others were writhing with a vengeance in the interim, and even long antecedent to that period betrayed symptoms notoriously suspicious. Johnson, struck the first blow, and pursued it with unrelenting acrimony, roused on every frivolous occasion, wickedly suggested, as the text intimates, for the space of thirty years. What were his motives? . . . . dare we say literary envy? Jealousy of a Brother's Fame? a weakness, admitting all his merits, of which that great man stands accused. Both were engaged in the same arduous task, though in somewhat a different line, the cultivation and improvement of the English Tongue. Johnson was not an orator, and had but little intercourse with the graces; therefore thought

slightingly

\* Boswell, [Friday March 24, An. 1775] in his usual way, tells the world "Johnson was in high spirits this evening at the club, and talked with great animation and success. He attacked Swift, as he used to do upon all occasions." —Vol. ii. p. 203.—see the several accounts before adverted to.

slightingly of Sheridan's Art. Sheridan had acquired a high reputation, and was much sought after, as an adept in the institution of youth; a department in which, however kept a secret, Dr. Johnson had been tried and found wanting.\* Nay possibly, very possibly, for Sheridan was no sycophant, and had a touch of his own condition, the Good Man might refuse subscription to the Great Man's dogmatic opinions, and presuming to think for himself, a way he had, disputed the Doctor's infallibility. These are not insisted upon as matters of importance; but it was known Sheridan had in contemplation an ENGLISH DICTIONARY, and the establishment of a NATIONAL ACADEMY upon the same principle, for which he was at the time soliciting patronage. That was an unequivocal avowal, and, in Johnson's imagination, an encroachment on his dictatorial consequence, which, connected with the rest, though they pursued very different routes, rankled in his mind, 'I thank thee, Boswell! for teaching me that word,' and manifestly gave offence; for in the Preface to his Dictionary, so early as the year 1755, Johnson steps out of his way, and even makes a temporary sacrifice of his political principles to have a wipe at Sheridan. Sheridan, more just to Johnson's literary reputation, overlooked the inuendo; cultivated his acquaintance, and had him at his table a constant guest. In the year 1762, Sheridan's scheme for a new English Dictionary was published. That memorable year he was nominated for a pension,† and, no way envious of his friend's celebrity, he seized the favourable opportunity; suggested the propriety of a provision for Johnson, and was the first who communicated to him the Royal Intention. § The return Dr. Johnson made

\* Found wanting.—See this topic farther illustrated in the Appendix No. 2.

† See Boswell's Johnson, vol. i. p. 349 . . . § Ibid. pp. 343, 4.

made him, and some part of Mr. Boswell's ingenious commentary, we have already seen; but for a more explicit detail we refer to the work itself.

In the interim, as we are on the subject of pensions, it may not be improper to add a few words by way of elucidation, in which we shall endeavour to follow our elaborate precursor, *haud passibus æquis*, who, notwithstanding the mighty pother he makes to persuade us of the pains he has been at in procuring the most authentic testimony, has not been altogether exact. He has indeed been minutely circumstantial in what relates to Dr. Johnson; in what relates to Sheridan he appears not so sedulously inquisitive. Mr. Sheridan's pension was granted to him, as that writer correctly says, 'not as a player;' nor, as he incorrectly states, 'as a sufferer in the cause of government.' He was in that respect at least on a footing with Johnson. The pension was granted to Sheridan, without sollicitation, 'as the reward of his literary merit.\*' Besides, Mr. Boswell should have recollected, that Sheridan was not only taken by the hand and encouraged to proceed in his Scheme of Education and his Dictionary, by his countryman, the Earl of Bute, who was then Prime Minister; but that on the same account he was recommended to his Sovereign by the Duke of Northumberland, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whose son, the brave Earl Percy, was his pupil, and by the powerful connections of the Hon. George Grenville, now Marquis of Buckingham, and his brother, who, under the care of their private Tutor, now an English Bishop,† made a visit to Dublin for the sole purpose

D

of

\* See Mrs. Sheridan's letters annexed, particularly that dated London, November 29th, 1762. . . See also Mr. Boswell, vol. i. p. 350.

† Few are the tutors in the sister kingdom who can boast of such comfortable terminations to their pains and sollicitudes in discharge of their laborious and momentous occupation.

of profiting by Sheridan's instructions, which in a very eminent degree they confessedly did, and during their stay there were frequently his guests. His Majesty's Bounty in like manner, about the same time, was extended to a Scotch gentleman, I think Dr. Douglas, or the Rev. Mr. Home, author of the Tragedy of that name. These marks of Royal Encouragement to literary merit were not in the intention simply confined to the individuals, happily selected for the occasion, on his Majesty's Accession to the Throne; but on an impartial scale to be considered as national compliments and earnest of Sovereign Protection to Genius in the several kingdoms of which those gentlemen were respectively natives; and were not a tax upon the national coffers, as in the case of ordinary pensions; but paid out of his Majesty's privy purse.——So ends the chapter of pensions.

To return: Sheridan is blamed for persevering resentment; we are by no means advocates for persevering resentment; but if justifiable in any case, it surely was in the case before us. Sheridan's resentment was an open honest indignation, arising from a proper sense of injurious treatment; it was spirited, not vindictive; it was repulsive, not mean. Was he again to run his head into the lion's mouth? and what was his security against savage attacks? His resentment was a measure of self-defence. Mr. Boswell says, he informed Sheridan, that Johnson would be glad to meet him amicably: on what authority he did so inform him does not appear. Where was his commission? There is no note thereof in his Diary, circumstantial as it is; no trace of any such conversation on the subject is to be found; had any thing of the kind taken place it would have been recorded. He would have made a merit of it, and, though it might have been an error in the costume, he would have marked it as an amiable trait in the character of his illustrious friend. His good intention shall



shall not be disputed; but the step was unwarranted, and the consequence at best problematical; there is no playing with edge tools. He acted officiously and deserved, what he was not unaccustomed to, a rebuff: It would not have been the first in cases very similar. The affair was Johnson's; did he ever retract his malicious insinuations? and what overtures in his own person appear towards a reconciliation? was it not rather prohibited by reiterated provocation? Boswell, kind soul! would impute it to an effect of vanity. Dr. Johnson does not simply attack his friend Sheridan's vanity; he ties him to the stake; "He feeds fat the ancient grudge he bears him"; he way-lays him; he assails him behind his back, and takes illiberal advantage of his absence to traduce and sport away his character; he attacks him in his profession; he endeavours to sap the foundation of his hard-earned fame, and to depreciate his just claims to public favour; but—"he allows him to be a good man:" that is, he indulges his spleen at Sheridan's expence, and "after a pause," to give his sarcasms their full effect, he bethinks him of a salvo. . . . "But Brutus is an honourable man." In his own case he might have thought it a subdulous evasion; a forced concession wholly nugatory on the footing of worldly success. Goodness, as virtue, is its own reward, and seldom the ground of competitorship. Dr. Johnson's pension was not granted him on account of his goodness; "*the pension was granted to Johnson solely as the reward of his literary merit.*"\* To what then did his negative compliment amount? The Jew may help Sheridan to an answer; his observation comes home to the occasion, though, even Johnson must admit, Sheridan was in no respect a Brother of the Tribe.

Nay,

\* Lord Loughborough's words. . . Boswell, vol. i. p. 342.

Nay, take my life and all, pardon not that :  
 You take my house, when you do take the prop  
 That doth sustain my house ; you take my life  
 When you do take the means whereby I live.

Sheridan had a family to provide for ; his means were in supposition, and, we may say, altogether depended on his estimation with the Public, which the strictures of Johnson were certainly not calculated to improve. Mr. Sheridan had great energy of mind ; he was an enthusiast in the cause of Education ; it was the favourite study of his life, and all his exertions ultimately tended to that one great object : so closely was it interwoven in his heart, that I have heard him in conversation on the subject declare to my Father, and I believe he was sincere in the declaration, however paradoxical it may seem, that he would rather see his two sons at the head of respectable Academies, as a situation the most beneficial to mankind, than one of them Prime Minister of Britain, and the other at the head of affairs in Ireland \* He might be over sanguine in his projects, and, on that head it must be confessed, somewhat singular in his notions ; yet they did not spring from the littleness of a selfish ambition ; but were founded on the broad basis of public good : they might not, in vulgar acceptation, be very splendid or sublime ; they might not exactly square with the politics of his children ; but they were not, for that reason, criminal ; and to say nothing of ingratitude, was it the part of a friend so looked up to, so conversant in matters of juvenile institution as Johnson was supposed to be, to thwart his benevolent Host's generous struggles for independence ? to treat him, whom

\* The eldest, Charles-Francis, was at that time Secretary at War and Member of the House of Commons in Ireland ; and the youngest, Richard-Brinsley, Representative for Stafford in England.

whom he allowed to be a good man, with derision, and to hold him up as an object for Scorn to point her flow and moving finger at? The figure is strong, and some may think the outline overcharged; but in such cases we are not to be guided merely by our own feelings; we are to have an eye to the conception and feelings of the character more immediately affected. What to one man is but matter of amusement, may be to another death. Boswell, in his Chronicle from the year 1762 to the year 1784 inclusive, no less than thirteen times introduces Mr. Sheridan, and every time for the sole purpose, it would seem, of abusing him; for almost in every instance, either directly, or by obvious implication, he is the Butt of reprehension, and his character episodically brought in as the vehicle of some illiberal reflection.

The active part he took in promoting Johnson to a pension is not absolutely denied; but in the manner of relating Boswell does all that in him lies to obscure the merit of it, and solicitously compliments all his friends with having a hand in it, even some who never pretended a claim,\* to ravish the Honour from Sheridan. It rests on the concession of Lord Loughborough, though, according to the report, grudgingly obtained, and certainly void of that ingenuous openness and manly liberality which might be expected from a person of his Lordship's exalted station and character. And, to borrow a favourite phrase of Boswell's, 'It is but just to add,' that the part Johnson acted on the occasion was affectedly scrupulous; shilly, shally; he would and he would not; more in the style of a wayward, squeamish, young

\* It has been asserted on respectable authority, that Mr. Murphy never assumed to himself the distinction of being the prime mover, as alledged, in the business of the pension to Johnson.

young spinster on the point of preferment, than a dignified sage. . . . Mr. Boswell tells us "the Earl of Bute, then Prime Minister, had the honour to announce this instance of his Sovereign's bounty." \* Two or three pages farther on, "Sheridan communicated to Johnson that a pension was granted to him," and from the great pensioner's remarkable and pointed reply, it is as clear as the clearest proposition in Euclid, this was the first time the welcome tidings reached his ears. † A venial slip of Mr. Boswell's; perhaps intentional, to support a disputed title, on the principle of a well known proverb, great wits have short memories. An apology the more requisite as this seems not the only slip of the kind. In the same page (as we have seen him) confessing his chagrin, at an affair which happened two and twenty years after, and relapsing into a smile, when the evil spirit had departed from him, he represents his very kind friend as the life and soul of society; for, as he says, "Sheridan's well-informed, animated and bustling mind never suffered conversation to stagnate." Some few pages afterwards he adopts a quite contrary sentiment, and with a visible kind of glee represents him as little better than a driveller—"Why Sherry is dull; naturally dull. . . . such an excess of stupidity is not in nature." But this was the response of his Oracle, and, we may suppose, like the oracles of old, verbal quirks and subterfuges never wanting to evade the charge of contradiction. The disabilities of Sheridan, 'who no revenue had but his good spirits to feed and clothe him,' are heavily laid, and roundly asserted. If just, it could not be for the agreeable amusement of his company or conversation that Johnson so constantly frequented his table. And if unfounded, what becomes of his vaunted attachment to truth? In the common accidents of life there are no great temptations to its violation,

\* See Boswell, vol. i. p. 341. † Ibid p. 344.



violation, and, when a character is obtained, it serves excellently as a stalking horse; if it answered his purpose, well; but in the present instance among others it may be seen, that when calumny and detraction was the theme he could let loose the rein, and without ceremony tread down the fences.\* On his rupture with Sheridan, to bring him into company where he *was not* might be an expedient to collect parties for his lonely evenings, and, no doubt, set the table in a roar. His Biographer, a constant attendant, we may also perceive, had the knack of playing into his hand; and it must be allowed, was a strenuous croupier.† In brief, for to trace him through all his doublings and eccentricities would be an Herculean task, not an incident recorded to

Sheridan's

\* Dr. Johnson was fond of arguing for victory, and would espouse either side of the question, right or wrong, to foil his adversary; a practice hardly to be justified on moral principles, and often repugnant to the interests of truth; a contrary conduct might have been less entertaining and not so favourable to the splendor of talents;

But of the two, less dangerous is the offence

To tire our patience than mislead our sense.

POPE.

A practice that trenches on the laws of sincerity is hardly compatible with an inviolable regard to truth; arguing for arguing's sake is children's play, squabbling for the love of noise: arguing for victory has a more dangerous aspect; 'tis like going to war for the sake of killing; a curious way of proving a humane and peaceable disposition. A mode of jesting so like earnest, may lead to very serious mistakes, and tho' the jest be discovered, the impression indelibly remains. Dr. Johnson, it must be allowed, was a great light, a shining light, but like other shining lights, if implicitly followed, may prove an *ignis fatuus*, and, *souee!* you go into a ditch.

† Croupier [croopeer] of which I know not the etymology. A word current in Ireland (on that account perhaps, omitted by Johnson) a name of office among the bon vivants at the festivals of Bacchus, given to the person seated at the opposite end of the table to assist the toast-master. His duty is to circulate the bottle, and see that the gentlemen of his *squad* do justice to the toast.—Bailey has a word very near akin. . . . Croúper [at a gaming-house] accented on the first syllable, One who watches the cards and gathers money for the bank or stake-tray. It is said to have been the occupation of a distinguished Commoner, and not beneath the acceptance of a Right Honourable. But in scandalous chronicle it no where appears our Biographer flourished in that department.

Sheridan's advantage, but is guarded with some cautionary restriction and coupled with clauses of abatement; some invidious glance at his person, his talents, his mode of life, or profession; the adoption of which 'tis well known Sheridan himself often lamented as matter of necessity not wantonly of choice; and, far from meaning a reproach, it is but justice to add, that to the same unrelenting Task-Mistress, Necessity, the world is indebted for the labours of Johnson, which drew forth those volumes of his life, in which irreconcilable enmity appears the leading feature of his conduct towards his old friend, Sheridan, throughout.

If there be an exception, it is a paragraph in the 3d volume, inserted as part of a desultory conversation said to have taken place in the year 1779, in which Sheridan's character, as a man of merit, is favourably exhibited; nevertheless, even there, a smatch of the old leaven is perceivable. The subject is introduced without any apparent connection, and a compliment to him seemingly intended; but the essence of it is done away, being connected with circumstances of dubious complexion, and founded on a Fact for which there is no authority. Boswell or Johnson, *Latet anguis in herba*. Let the impartial reader determine; the documents, though not numerous, are sufficient. From an attention to which also, it must evidently follow that Mr. Boswell's claims to scrupulous authenticity, at least in this instance, are not unexceptionably founded. The originals might have been examined, without running half over London; and personal information was always at hand.

Boswell, speaking of Johnson, says—"He observed his old friend, Mr. Sheridan, had been honoured with extraordinary attention in his own country, by having had an exception made in his favour in an Irish Act of Parliament concerning Insolvent Debtors. Thus to be singled out,"  
said

said he, "by a Legislature, as an object of public consideration and kindness, is a proof of no common merit."\* [p. 171.]

Not to indulge a captious disposition, at the first blush this paragraph betrays something of a contradiction; for even on the high authority alledged Johnson's unqualified admission of his old friend's uncommon merit is scarcely reconcileable to that excess of stupidity denounced, as noticed a page or two before, in his oracular capacity. However, taken naked as it stands, the eulogium is speciously advanced, and on slight grounds we should not deny him the credit of it; involved with other circumstances, as previously observed, it has something in it of an equivocal nature, and comparing

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\* This affair is erroneously taken up in the same light by Davies in his *Life of Garrick*. Boswell often speaks of Davies as a learned and ingenious Writer for whom Dr. Johnson had a particular kindness, by whose advice and encouragement he undertook that pleasing monument to the memory of our English Roscius. But though it is not wholly free from partiality, natural enough in a Biographer, to his Hero, he has not raised a magnificent colossus to him on the broken statues of his contemporaries; when the subject leads him to mention Mr. Sheridan, his great master's competitor and rival, he speaks with ingenuous freedom, and not for the invidious purpose of dragging him into ludicrous notice. The following is the paragraph particularly alluded to, which will bring the Reader more intimately acquainted with Mr. Sheridan's true character, and in some measure counteract the poison of Boswell.

"This gentleman [Mr. Sheridan] had been long esteemed a man of eminence in his profession, and notwithstanding Mr. Garrick's great reputation for acting, some critics did not scruple to compare, nay, prefer Sheridan's performance of certain capital characters, such as *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, &c. to the other's utmost efforts in those parts."

"But indeed the Manager's own jealousy justified the public good opinion of Mr. Sheridan's ability; though certainly there was a wide difference between their several pretensions; neither in person or voice had nature been very kind to the latter. But his judgment, his learning, and

it with the general tenour of his assertions, a doubt arises whether it was seriously or ironically intended. As the matter stands wholly insulated, there is no forming any judgment from the context; but it comes in a questionable shape, and must rest solely on its own intrinsic merits. In that light it is unluckily featured, and bears confutation on the face of it. If insolvent acts were calculated generally for the punishment, not relief, of unfortunate defaulters, the story of a clause of exception in favour of an individual might carry weight; but Johnson was too conversant in parliamentary usage to be imposed on, which makes it difficult to conceive, if the discourse be fairly stated, that he meant it seriously. "Somebody, to rouse Johnson, might wickedly "have said it," and that was his method of retorting. He always disputed Sheridan's merits, for which no doubt he had his reasons, and on a supposition that he thought it merely a speculation of his old friend's partizans, a report fabricated

and close application to study, compensated in some degree for the want of external advantages. His manner, though certainly not very pleasing, was supposed to be his own, and not borrowed from an imitation of others. He had besides the advantage of an excellent character in private life. *Sheridan had the peculiar honour, when absent from Ireland, to be distinguished by the legislature of his country, as a man whose particular interest was worthy of their care and attention. . . .* Mr. Garrick soon found that his engagement with this actor was of very great advantage to him. Little difference in the bulk of audiences was to be perceived when they acted separately the parts of Hamlet and Richard, or any other capital characters. The Manager himself owned that, except Barry, he had never found so able an assistant; for the best of them he said, would not draw together a hundred pound audience; but Garrick's ruling passion was the love of fame, and his uneasiness arising from the success of Sheridan began every day to be more and more visible," which we find, by Mr. Davies's Account, terminated in a total separation not much to the honour or advantage of the Manager.

Davies's Life of Garrick, vol. i. pp. 300, 1. London printed 1784, 2 vol. 4th edit. the first edition bears date April 22, 1780.



fabricated to enhance his character, the sarcasm comes pointed with double force. No Gentleman of information, particularly from Ireland, could consider it as complimentary; for, improbabilities apart, it rests upon a Fact to which, had any such existed, they could not be strangers. It must have been an affair of public notoriety, open to inspection; but in truth no such exception is on record. The particular Act alluded to, and the Journals of the House of Commons, printed by authority, are now under consultation, and no vestiges of any such exception are to be met with in either. Whatever gave birth to it, the story as related is fictitious, and can do no honour to the memory of Mr. Sheridan in the estimation of any intelligent person who really respected him. His merit stood in no need of meretricious varnish or adventitious support; the Public were in full possession of it; but the kindness he experienced was the kindness of private friendship. The effort of One who seldom let an opportunity of serving those for whom he professed a friendship escape him. The subject has been already touched upon,\* which as a literary anecdote a few incontrovertible facts will more satisfactorily elucidate; they are extracted from my Father's papers, and are faithful to the Original.

JOURNALS of the HOUSE of COMMONS, Vol. xiv. } Page 207 †  
Martis, II die Martii, 1766.

" A Petition of *Samuel Whyte* and other principal Creditors of Thomas Sheridan, Esq. was presented to the House and read; setting forth, that the said Thomas Sheridan, late Manager of the Theatre in Smock-alley, having contracted several debts which he was unable to answer, was obliged to quit the kingdom, from the persecution of some of his Creditors,

who

\* See WHYTE'S POEMS: Notes and Illustrations, p. 297.

† In the edit. of 1771. . . . in a subsequent Edition, viz. in that of 1782, page 229, where Petitioner's name is inaccurately spelled, *White*.

who refused to sign a Letter of Licence, by which he is cut off from every prospect of paying his debts, or providing for his family. And praying, that the said Thomas Sheridan may have such protection and relief as to the House shall seem meet."

" Ordered, that the said Petition be referred to the said Committee."

This was entirely a voluntary measure of the Petitioner, without the participation or even knowledge of Mr. Sheridan, who, for the reasons set forth in the Petition, had retired with his family to Blois in France. The situation of his affairs, though greatly deranged, had not deprived him of every resource; he had still a Friend, who, not unconscious of the difficulties in his way, entertained hopes of finding, one day or other, the means of restoring him to his country. At length an opportunity seemed to present itself. A Bill was brought into Parliament for the Relief of Insolvent Debtors under certain limitations. Petitions poured into the House from every quarter; but Mr. Sheridan's absence, at so remote a distance, rendered it impossible, had he been ever so much inclined, to take advantage of the occasion. The Bill was some time pending, and Petitioner, who had preconcerted his plan, waited its progress with silent expectation; for he knew Mr. Sheridan, in consequence of his critical situation, had many enemies, and some very indiscreet friends, whose officiousness might prove as detrimental as the machinations of his adversaries; both of which were to be guarded against; he therefore, for fear of accidents, kept close his intentions, and postponed his application to the last hour, that those whom he suspected inimical might not have time to unite their forces and make head against him. Tuesday, March 11, was the day fixed for the final Resolution of the House.

House. On the Sunday morning preceding, Petitioner went to Bellingham Boyle, Esq; of Rathfarnham Castle, whose kind partiality he had long experienced, and for the first time opened his design. Mr. Boyle listened to it with his accustomed cordiality, and very much applauded the intention, but did not flatter him with great expectation of success; for he imagined it would meet with a powerful opposition, and the time was too short to secure a party to carry it through. Petitioner earnestly remonstrated, and explained his motives for the delay, which Mr. Boyle, upon consideration, thinking feasible, he proposed to consult Mr. Tisdall [the Attorney General] and a few more of the leading Members, to whom Petitioner was well known, and promised, as soon as possible, to apprize him of the result. The succeeding evening, at a very late hour, he was summoned to attend at the Chambers of Mr. Fitzgerald, Judge of the Admiralty, where he found the Attorney General, the Provost, Mr. Boyle, and six or seven Members more, in consultation. Having satisfied them in some points touching the business in question, they gave him instructions to prepare a Petition, to be presented to the House early the next day, and, as they had no doubt Mr. Sheridan had many well-wishers among his Creditors, directed him to get it signed by as many of them as he could, which, seeing the business in train, and his example, a joint and equal sufferer, before them, it was supposed none of them would refuse.

Here indeed he met with the most mortifying disappointments; for, though all those he judged it prudent to confide in, declared themselves satisfied of Mr. Sheridan's probity and good intentions, and acknowledged, without reserve, that the particulars were fairly and honestly stated, he could

not

not procure a single name in addition to his own to countenance the application. George Faulkner, whom he looked upon as his sheet anchor, was the first that excused himself. † The morning being wasted in fruitless solicitations, no time was to be lost; the Petition, in its original conception, which was merely a rough draft hastily made out, and crude as it obviously must be, was delivered to Mr. Boyle, who, though a strenuous and active colleague, was no speaker, and he committed it to Mr. Fitzgerald. That Gentleman, in a very happily-conceived speech, recommended it to the House; the celebrated Charles Lucas, M. D. Representative for Dublin, Petitioner's most intimate Friend, seconded the motion, which was warmly supported by Mr. Adderley. . . . . It passed unanimously . . . . The Petitioner to attend the Committee on Thursday the last of their sitting.

JOHN MONCK MASON, Esq. in the Chair.

The late Lord Viscount Doneraile, and the present Lord Viscount Northland, his earliest and most steady patrons, then in the Commons, received him at the door, and taking him by the hand announced him to the Committee, saying, "Here comes the worthy Petitioner for Mr. Sheridan." This was an encouraging reception, and the prelude to a more signal instance of favour in the sequel. Standing at the foot of the table, the Book, as is the usage, was handed to him; but the test of an Affidavit was dispensed with.

Mr. Tottenham immediately rose, and addressing the Chair, expatiated at some length on the purport of the Petition before them, and the extraordinary circumstance of its introduction to the House. A Creditor petitioning the Legislature in behalf of his Debtor, he observed, was very much out of the usual course, and the single instance of the kind, he

† Something more of this Gentleman in a subsequent page.



he believed, that ever solicited the attention of Parliament. Among other encomiums, of which he was by no means sparing, he said, it was a spirited and laudable exertion of friendship, evidently proceeding from a disinterested principle, and in his opinion merited particular consideration and respect; adding, "*I therefore move you, that Petitioner shall not be put to his OATH; but the Facts set forth in his Petition be admitted simply on his word.*" His motion was seconded by an instantaneous, Ay! Ay! without a dissenting voice. A few questions were then put, purely as it were for form's sake, and Petitioner was dismissed with repeated testimonies of applause and congratulations of success.

The Creditors, most likely, either did not wish or imagine he would carry his point; for when they found the business effected, they appeared in a combination to abuse him; and not only reproached him for meddling, as they called it, but affected to look upon him as responsible to them for the whole of their respective demands; because, as they alledged, he had without their concurrence had recourse to Parliament to their prejudice, and deprived them of the means of prosecuting their just claims. Some of them actually consulted counsel, and took steps for the purpose of compelling him to pay them out of his own pocket. The idea may be now laughed at; but the thing was very seriously menaced: and in his situation, unhackneyed as he was in the ways of men;\* of a profession too of all others the most exposed to anxiety and trouble, with at best very inadequate compensation, it must have been an accumulated grievance, and their vindictive malice not a little alarming.

Mr. Sheridan's subsequent letters on the subject, now in the Editor's hands, at the same time that they more clearly  
explain

\* He was of a retired habit; just turned of thirty, and scarcely eight years conversant in business.

explain and corroborate the facts, remain a decisive testimony of his principles, and reflect a genuine lustre on his character as a Husband, a Father, a moral Man, and a Christian.

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*To Mr. Samuel Whyte, Master of the English Grammar-School, in Grafton-street, Dublin. Via Londres, Angleterre.*

DEAR SAM!

YOUR long-expected letter has at length arrived without date. You mention in it that it was writ the post after Mr. Sheen's, but by some strange fatality it has been six weeks longer in its passage. I own your long silence astonished me, and raised in me many mortifying reflections. The general neglect which I experienced from all quarters in my distressed situation, created in me such an apathy for all the affairs of this life, that I was almost brought to wish to pass the rest of my days

*Oblitusque meorum obliviscendus et illis.*

But your last has shewn me that friendship is not wholly banished from the earth. I find that it is to your care solely I am indebted for the turn my affairs have taken, and it pleased me the more, as you are the only person living to whom I would wish to owe such an obligation. Your silence during the transaction carries its excuse with it. It was better on every account that the attempt should be made without my privacy. And to deal ingenuously with you, had you consulted me, I should never have consented to it. But as the thing has passed with so much credit to me, the whole honour and merit of it is yours. What I mentioned in a former, relative to an act of Parliament, had no reference to any such act to be made in Ireland, of which I had not the least idea; but to an English act passed the sessions before for the relief of insolvent debtors, with the nature  
of

of which I desired to be made acquainted. . . . You have not made me acquainted with the circumstances of the act, in which, through your friendly and disinterested exertions, I am concerned; nor mentioned the time that it will be proper for me to go to Ireland. I should be glad you would take the first opportunity of conveying a copy of the act to Mr. Chamberlaine, because there are some points on which I would take advice in London, before my setting out for Dublin. And now, my dear SAM! I must tell you, that without your farther assistance it will be impossible for me to reap the benefit of what you have done for me. From the perpetual fluctuation in the ministry, the payments are no longer punctual at the Treasury. There is now due to me a year of my pension; and at the moment I am writing to you I am reduced to my last Louis. I had relied upon receiving about fifty pound from Sheen, for the books and a year's rent of a certain farm at Quilca. But this I find, without any notice given me, has been forestalled, and Sheen writes me word that he has not a shilling to spare. I had before applied to some friends in England, who had made large professions to me; but I find, by an obstinate silence on their part, that nothing is to be expected from them. My sole reliance at present is upon you; nor should I have the least doubt on me, if your abilities were equal to your good will. But I must conjure you by all that is sacred in friendship to raise a hundred pounds for me, as speedily as you can, and convey it to William Whately, Esq; Banker in London, for my use; on the receipt of which I will immediately set out for England in my way to Dublin. Mrs. Sheridan and the Children will continue in France, 'till my affairs are settled; and after that you may rely upon it that this is the first debt I shall think myself bound to discharge. I need not

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say more upon this head; I am sure your utmost endeavours will not be wanting to serve me in this exigence, and to complete what you have so well begun.

And now I must give you some account of what we have been doing since our arrival at Blois. I have long since finished the Dictionary, and have got together the greatest part of the materials for the Grammar, which only want being reduced into order. I have likewise almost finished a volume of Dialogues on the English Language, to serve as a preparative for the other work. The more I reflect on the general use which must be made of this work wherever English is taught, the more I am convinced that the profits of it will be considerable; and that if I keep the right of the Copy to myself (which is my design) it will be an estate to my family. I have finished a Grammar too in English and French, for the use of all foreigners who understand French, that are desirous of attaining a knowledge of the English tongue by an easy and short method. I have also drawn up a Grammar in English to facilitate the attainment of the French tongue to all who speak English; a work much wanted, and which I began at first for the use of my children, upon finding the great imperfection of all hitherto published with that view. Mrs. Sheridan has writ a comedy called a Trip to Bath, in which some good judges in England find a great deal of merit. She has also made two additional volumes to the Memoirs of Sidney, and has begun a Tragedy in prose upon part of the story contained in this latter part. Thus you see, that, together with the time employed in the instruction of the children, we have not been idle since our arrival here. Our coming to Blois has been attended with the happy circumstance of restoring Mrs. Sheridan to a perfect good state of health, a blessing which she had not known  
for



for ten years before; and this alone would make me think it a fortunate event which drove us hither. But I have other reasons to bless this event. It has afforded me an opportunity of acquiring two of the most useful kinds of knowledge, which one can be possessed of in this life; I mean a knowledge of the world, and a knowledge of myself. To know the world well, one must cease to be an actor in the busy scene of life, and be contented to be an humble spectator; and to know one's self well, long uninterrupted leisure for self-examination, at a distance from the turbulence and seductions of the world, is essentially necessary. The result of my reflections with regard to the world has been the same with that of the wise man, that it is, Vanity of Vanities. But I have not like him ended my enquiries there. My mind could never rest in so dispiriting a conclusion; it naturally led me to the consideration of another life, where all that is amiss here will be rectified. And after the most unprejudiced enquiries, I remained in the full conviction, that it is from RELIGION alone that we can hope for contentment in this life, or happiness in a future one: and the result of my self-examination was, a determined resolution to make her sacred dictates the guide of all my future actions. Don't think, SAM! that either superstition or melancholy have had the least influence on this occasion, for I have not a grain of either in my composition; it has been the effect of a long, cool, deliberate train of reflection.

I am sorry I was not before made acquainted with the very kind part which Mr. Boyle took in my affairs. I fear a letter, after so great a distance of time, would appear with but an ill grace: I must therefore beg you will take it upon yourself to make him my most grateful acknowledgments, and at the same time the apology for my silence. You do not say a word about Mrs. Whyte, nor your Boy. Do you think

think we are indifferent with regard to what concerns you? Assure Mr. and Mrs. Guinness of my warmest regards and best wishes. I did intend to return a few lines in answer to the obliging ones which she added to yours, but you see the paper is finished.

I am ever sincerely  
and affectionately yours,

*Blois, August 1st, 1766.*

THOMAS SHERIDAN.

This letter affords indubitable proof of the Writer's great reliance on his Friend; and the following will equally evince his Friend was no temporizer; and that his attention to Mr. Sheridan, or his alacrity to serve him, neither distance of situation, nor change of circumstances, abated.

TO MR. SAMUEL WHYTE, IN GRAFTON-STREET, DUBLIN.

SIR,

*London, 13th August, 1766.*

I HAVE received your favour of the 9th, with a Bill on Messrs. Ker and co. for £25. . . which shall be passed to the account of Mr. Sheridan as desired. I am, for Messrs. Castells, and myself,

Sir, your most humble servant,

WILLIAM WHATELY.

SIR,

*London, 17th September, 1766.*

I HAVE received your favour of the 11th, with a Bill on Mr. Clarke for £75. . . which shall be placed to the account of Mr. Thomas Sheridan. I am, for Messrs. Castells, and myself,

Sir, your most humble servant,

*Aug. 9th. Rem. 25 : 0 : 0*

WILLIAM WHATELY.

*Sep. 11th. do. . 75 : 0 : 0*

*Total £100 : 0 : 0 Brit. Curr.*

*To*

*To Mr. Samuel Whyte, Master of the English Grammar-School,  
in Grafton-street, Dublin. Via Londres, Angleterre.*

*Paris, October 13th, 1766.*

OFTEN have I sat down to write to you an account of the most fatal event that could befall me in this life, and as often have thrown aside the pen. Oh, my dear SAM! the most excellent of women is no more. Her apparent malady was an intermitting fever, attended with no one bad symptom, 'till the day before her death, when she was suddenly deprived of her senses, and all the fatal prognosticks of a speedy dissolution appeared. She died the death of the righteous, without one pang, without a groan. The extraordinary circumstances attending her case made me resolve to have her opened: when it was found that the whole art of medicine could not have prolonged her days, as all the noble parts were attacked, and any one of four internal maladies must have proved mortal. If the news of this event has not yet reached Dublin, break it to my Sister as gently as you can. I set out from this in a few days for St. Quintin, a town about half way between this and Calais, where I purpose to leave my Children, in the hands of Protestants, to whom they are strongly recommended. As soon as I have settled them, I shall set out for London, and thence proceed to Dublin as speedily as possible. I thank you for your last letter and the remittance, without which I should not have been able to have made this arrangement.—SAM! you have lost a Friend who valued you much. I have lost what the world cannot repair, a bosom Friend, another self. My children have lost—Oh their Loss is neither to be expressed nor repaired. But the will of God be done.

I am ever sincerely,

and affectionately yours,

THOMAS SHERIDAN.

It

It is a just remark of Dr. Johnson's, that "many things which are false are transmitted from book to book and gain credit in the world," an observation which comes home to the experience of most intelligent readers, and has been abundantly verified in the case of Mr. Sheridan. The preceding facts speak for themselves, and the documents will hardly be disputed. In a former page of this volume, it is said, that he died at Margate, Thursday, August the 16th.\* This is an error of the press, it should be Thursday, August the 14th, 1788. He had performed a long and difficult part in the eye of the Public, and his final exit was not unnoticed. Memoirs of the late Thomas Sheridan, Esq; appeared in the European Magazine for the months of September,† October,† November,† and December,† subsequent; stating in the first instance, according to custom, the supposed particulars of his birth and parentage, as follows:

"Thomas Sheridan was the eldest son of Dr. Thomas Sheridan, an eminent divine and schoolmaster, but more celebrated as the friend and companion of Dean Swift, by Miss Macpherson, daughter of a Scots gentleman. He was born at Quilca, a place which to future times will acquire a degree of importance, as the residence of Swift, and the birth-place of most of Mr. Sheridan's family; particularly the author of the School for Scandal.‡"—And in a prior publication, containing Memoirs of Richard-Brinsley Sheridan, that gentleman is described as "the eldest son of Thomas Sheridan and Frances his wife, born at Quilca near Dublin."

These memoirs were republished verbatim in different places, particularly in the Edinburgh and Dublin Magazines; the

\* WHYTE'S POEMS, p. 298. —† Eur. Mag. pp. 210, 274, 325, 498.

‡ See also Biographia Dramatica, article Sheridan.



the latter by Pat. Byrne, bookseller, Grafton-street. . . . .  
It must be presumed that the Compiler proceeded on the best information he could collect; but his information was not authentic. Mrs. Knowles, Mr. Sheridan's youngest and only surviving Sister, who at the time presided over an eminent Boarding-School for young Ladies in York-street, was consulted as to the facts, and her account, which cannot be controverted, ran widely different.

Thomas Sheridan was not the first-born of their Parents; her brother Richard being upwards of three years his senior, whose eldest Son of the same name, late a King's Counsel, and Member for Charlemont, was present at the relation. The name of the Doctor's first-born son was James, who died young and was buried in St. Mary's Church-yard, August 22d, 1724, as appears by the Register; consequently Thomas was his third son. Neither was their Mother's maiden name Macpherfon, nor was she of Scotch extraction. Her name was Elizabeth Macfadden, the only child of an Irish gentleman of the Province of Ulster. Mrs. Knowles could not see the propriety of distinguishing Quilca as the settled residence of Swift, more than Sir Arthur Acheson's, Mr. Matthews's, Mr. Hamilton's, or any other place where he might have been an invited guest, or for a few months occasionally accommodated: and setting down Quilca as the birth-place of her brother Thomas, or any of his family, was void of all foundation; for her Mother and Sister were remarkably timid on those occasions, and invariably fixed on the Capital, where they were in the way of more immediate and better assistance than could be expected in the country. Her brother Thomas, as well as herself, and the rest of the Doctor's children, were born in Capel-street, in King James's  
mint-

mint-house, as it was called, where her Father held his school;\* and her brother Tom's third son, Richard-Brinsley, author of the *School for Scandal*, was born at his Father's house in Dorset-street, Dublin, where his eldest son Thomas, who died in childhood, Charles-Francis, and his eldest daughter, were also born; and all his children, except the youngest daughter, who was born in Henrietta-street, Covent Garden, London, were baptized in St. Mary's Church, where likewise the Doctor her Father's children all received their Baptism. This account is confirmed by the Register, to be seen in the Church books of St. Mary's, Dublin,† which could not well have been the case had they been born at Quilca; a journey of about fifty English miles from Dublin, and not, as asserted, in the neighbourhood of that Metropolis.

Without entering into other matters, there are some things to be corrected in the story told of George Faulkner, of ostentatious memory, which but ill squares with his conduct on a former occasion mentioned, and seems more calculated for eclat, than consistent with the Fact.‡ His relinquishing his securities, were it really the case, two years after the power of enforcing them had been superseded, was but an empty compensation for refusing his Name when it might have been of use; but the Alderman knew Printers, and Printers knew him. The paragraph told prettily, and he obtained the Feather. *Quiescant mortui!* . . . The business was done without him.||

Mr.

\* See an account of the former and present state of this ancient Edifice after the Table of Contents. *WHYTE'S POEMS*, p. viii. . . . A plate of which is given, as a Tail-piece, at the end of the first poem called the Theatre, or Mirrour for Youth addited to the Theatre-Mania.

† Extract from the Register of St. Mary's Parish, Dublin. Charles-Francis, son of Thomas and Frances Sheridan, baptized July 23d, 1750—Richard-Brinsley, son of Mr. and Mrs. Sheridan, baptized November 4th, 1751.

‡ See a specimen of this worthy Alderman's kindness, page 30, line 2.

|| The paragraph alluded to, which was omitted in the former Edition, is added in a subsequent page, with a few cursory remarks, of which some of our readers suggested the propriety.

Mr. Sheridan arrived in Dublin, from France, in the month of October, 1766, and, as the Act directs, appeared in Court during the Term to take the benefit of it in form. Very shortly after, having no scheme of secreting his property, a trick too common on such occasions, a meeting of his Creditors was called by public advertisement, and the remains of his fortune, which chiefly consisted of surplus rents arising from a certain farm at Quilca, which he had formerly purchased from his eldest brother, and had in his difficulties mortgaged to a brother-in-law, was vested in three of the Creditors,\* in trust for the whole, who, without let or molestation, permitted him the free enjoyment of the same till his death. Some months after Quilca was advertised to be sold,† and the purchase money was honourably appropriated, upon an average of the outstanding debts, to the purpose of discharging them. . . . No dirty expedient was attempted to evade payment,‡ though at the interval of

G

two

\* Tho. Adderly, Esq. M. P. Robert Birch of Turvey, Esq. M. P. and Wm. Lefanu, Esq. who was the principal agent, and honourably, as on every other occasion thro' an exemplary life of 86 years, discharged the trust reposed in him. The two last of whom were living when these Remarks were first published; Mr Birch is now the only survivor—April 3d, 1798.

† The Equity of Redemption rather, Anno 1789; which brought about 650l. subject to the mortgage, which devolved to the mortgagee's daughter, who now enjoys the issues and profits.

‡ This passage is literally transcribed from the Author's MS. It is feelingly given from his own personal experience in other cases, to which it manifestly alludes. The Items, not trifling nor a few, are on his Books; upwards of fifteen hundred pounds for board and tuition. . . £1500!!! Liberal education truly, with a witness. It was not in that way my FATHER showed his gratitude to the worthy preceptor of his youth; knowing a considerable sum for his board and instruction had been suffered to accumulate, when he came of age he called for the account, and, adding the interest, discharged the whole to the uttermost farthing. This decided proof of his pupil's honour and integrity the good old gentleman

two and twenty years, no interest during that time having been paid or called for, the statute of limitation might have been pleaded in full force; the Creditors were publicly apprized of the intended distribution, and every claimant, duly producing vouchers, received his dividend respectively apportioned.

In a Work of considerable merit and utility, which lately issued from the American Press, it is recorded, under the head of Eminent Men, that "the Rev. Doctor Thomas Sheridan, " of Ireland, Author of the English Dictionary, Works on " Elocution, &c. died August 14th, 1788." Here Father and Son are evidently confounded. . . . Well! and what matter, cries his Worship in stilts; he sees no occasion for such *great minuteness*: What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba? Very true, Sir! and is the Sneer less applicable to your Alexanders and your Cæsars, those Gods on Earth, who have been hung up to posterity on as disputable authority, and to as little purpose?—An honest man's the noblest work of God.—He is an example proper for imitation, and such alone are worthy of commemorating. Pope on the various pursuits of mankind, among others, speaking of your Heroes and your Politicians, comes precisely to the point:

But grant that those can conquer, these can cheat,

'Tis phrase absurd to call a VILLAIN great.

September 5, 1796.

gentleman on his death-bed pathetically inculcated to his children, whom, in that awful crisis, he recommended to his care. They are living, and take pleasure in testifying the facts. One instance of the like kind, and but one in the course of forty years, my FATHER has experienced in his own practice.





E X T R A C T S  
AND  
ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS,  
ALLUDED TO IN THE COURSE OF THE REMARKS  
ON BOSWELL'S JOHNSON;  
INCLUDING THE  
REAL HISTORY OF THE GOLD MEDAL  
GIVEN TO THE AUTHOR OF THE  
TRAGEDY OF DOUGLAS.

OUR Author\* in his Observations concerning Imitation, quoting a passage from Lord Roscommon, opposes it to a similar passage in the Essay on Criticism by our English Homer. Pope, he remarks, on the Structure of Poetic Numbers, lays down the following rule :

'Tis not enough no harshness gives offence,  
The sound should be an echo to the sense."

Essay on Criticism, verse 364.

The last line, with the alteration of a single word, is evidently borrowed from the noble Peer; not perhaps with the usual felicity of great genius, which is to improve upon the original. The idea of making the sound a comment or echo to the sense is coeval with poetry itself; a doctrine founded in nature and clearly demonstrable on the principles of harmony and good taste, we may add too, a doctrine universally received as orthodox, till of late combated by Dr. Johnson and a few of his implicit disciples. It is a favourite subject  
of

\* MR. WHYTE... Preliminary Essay to his POEMS, new Edit. p. lv.

of Sheridan's, and for that very reason, as it appears, fastidiously, and I will say ungratefully, opposed by Johnson, whom Sheridan in the day of emergency had essentially served.\* The circumstance could not be obliterated; but as the sense of obligation is painful to some minds, from a false conceit of something in it humiliating, it was a perpetual blister to the Doctor, which, whenever the name of Sheridan was but glanced at, irritated his sarcastic disposition, and was the real ground of that irreconcilable difference which latterly subsisted between them. . . . This may sound harsh to the memory of that great Moralist, but (both have paid the debt of nature) it is simply doing justice to the other, which indeed is virtually granted, though it must be observed with manifest reluctance, by Boswell himself. Boswell in his ardour for Johnson generally uses the name of Sheridan invidiously, and for the most part ignorantly or wilfully mistakes facts, and misrepresents the man.† The Writer speaks from his own knowledge, and especially as to two, the most considerable instances, wherein he himself was the principal Agent. *Quæ ipse miserrima vidi, et quorum pars magna fui*, (b. c.) One of the instances alluded to is in another

\* Boswell's Life of Johnson, 3 vols. Lond. 1793, 2d Edit. vol. i. pp. 341, 2. That Journalist on the head of Johnson's Pension tells us, "The Earl of Bute, who was then Prime Minister, had the honour to announce this instance of his Sovereign's Bounty, &c." and p. 343, 44, acknowledging on the concession of Lord Loughborough, that Sheridan was the PRIME MOVER of the Business, says "and it is but just to add, that Mr. Sheridan told me, that when he communicated to Dr. Johnson that a Pension was to be granted to him, he replied in a fervour of gratitude, *The English Language does not afford me terms adequate to my feelings on this occasion. I must have recourse to the French. I am pénétré with his Majesty's goodness. . . .* When I repeated this to Dr. Johnson he did not contradict it."

BOSWELL.

† Ibid. pp. (a) 349, 50, 51, 52, 53; 417; 543; 581; 589. Vol. ii. pp. 16. (b) 204; 5; 364. Vol. iii. pp. (c) 171; 470; 476; 594, &c.

another place transiently taken up; \* the other, as an anecdote connected with the literary history of the times, shall now be related.

Dr. Johnson affected to dislike the Tragedy of Douglas, which, as Boswell says, "He called a foolish Play," partly, we may suppose, from national prejudice, being written by a Scotchman, and partly because, as he had heard, it was wonderfully admired by his friend Sheridan, whom, as Boswell gives it from the Doctor's own mouth, "he wantonly and insolently treated in a coffee-house at Oxford, because he presented its Author with a Gold Medal;" which Johnson quaintly enough phrases "counterfeiting Apollo's coin." — There is something suspicious in the story of this puny gasconade. — Sheridan was not remarkably pacific in cases of insults offered; for, adopting the words of Hamlet, his favourite character, he might justly say of himself, *though I am not splenetic and rash, yet have I in me something dangerous, which let thy wisdom fear.*† And as to the circumstance of the Medal it would seem both the Doctor and Biographer were but partially informed. When the Tragedy of Douglas first came out, Mr. Sheridan, then Manager of the Dublin Theatre, received a printed copy of it from London, which having, according to custom, previously read to his company, he cast for representation; for it is true he highly admired it, and apprized the performers, it was his intention to give the author his third nights, as if the play had been originally brought out at his own house; an unprecedented act of liberality in the Manager, which, it was thought, would be wonderfully productive

\* WHYTE'S POEMS, new Edition. . . . Notes on the Theatre or Mirrour for Youth added to the Teatro-Mania, p. 297.

† Witness the well-known affair of Kelly's Riot, as it was called, detailed by VICTOR, and HITCHCOCK, and noticed in a subsequent page.

productive to the Author. The first night, as the play had received the sanction of a British audience, the house was crammed, and the second night kept pace with the first. The printers mean while were not idle; it now issued from the Irish press, and unfortunately for the poor Author, a dissenting Clergyman, with an ecclesiastical anathema against him annexed. Things instantly took a new turn; the play was reprobated, and considered as a profanation of the clerical character; a faction was raised against it, and the third night, which was expected to be an overflow, fell miserably short of Expences. The Manager was in an awkward predicament; he was the cause of raising expectations, at least innocently, that could not be answered; and stood committed to the Author and his friends in a business, which unforeseen accidents had utterly defeated. . . . An unfeeling mind might have let it rest there; but it was not an unfeeling mind that dictated the measure. Something must be done; and though the Writer of this account was at the time a very young man, Mr. Sheridan was pleased to communicate to him his difficulties on the occasion. The first idea was to write a friendly letter to the Rev. Author, and accompany it with a handsome piece of plate. To this I took the liberty to object; for, as I understood he was not a family man, it might run him to expence in showing it, which in such a case was a very natural piece of vanity, and surely in itself no way reprehensible. I rather thought something he could conveniently carry about with him would answer better; suppose a piece of Gold in the way of a Medal. Mr. Sheridan thanked me for the hint, and advising with Mr. Robert Calderwood, a silversmith of the first eminence, a man of letters also and good taste, he threw out the very same idea, influenced by pretty much the same reasons:



reasons: It was executed accordingly; the intrinsic value somewhere about twenty guineas. On one side was engraved a Laurel Wreath, and on the reverse, as nearly as I remember, at the distance of almost forty years, the following Inscription:

*Thomas Sheridan, Manager of the Theatre Royal, Smock-alley, Dublin, presents this small token of his gratitude to the Author of Douglas, for his having enriched the Stage with a Perfect Tragedy.*

Soon after I carried it with me to London, and through the favour of Lord Macartney, it was delivered to the Minister, Lord Bute, for his countryman the Author of Douglas. But even this also he was near being deprived of; for on the road, a few miles from London, I was stopped by highwaymen, and preserved the well-meant offering, by the sacrifice of my purse, at the imminent peril of my life. It was considered merely as a sort of compensation for the disappointment in regard of the third nights' profits, and certainly no proof of ostentation in the Manager: on what principle of decency then could Dr. Johnson treat his old Friend with that wanton insolence which he boasts he thought proper to indulge on the occasion?\*

To deal ingenuously and give every man fair play, the following passage, particularly referred to, touching Johnson's animosity to Sheridan and Swift, is given from Boswell entire:

"On Friday, March 24, 1775,—Johnson was in high spirits this evening at the club, and talked with great animation and success. He attacked Swift, as he used to do upon all occasions. "The Tale of a Tub" is so much superiour to his other writings, that one can hardly believe he was the author of it. There is in it such a vigour of mind, such a swarm of thoughts, so much of nature, and art, and life."

I wondered

\* Boswell's Life of Dr. Johnson, vol. ii. pp. 203, 4, 5.

I wondered to hear him say of "Gulliver's Travels," "When once you have thought of big men and little men, it is very easy to do the rest." I endeavoured to make a stand for Swift, and tried to rouse those who were much more able to defend him; but in vain. Johnson at last of his own accord allowed very great merit to the inventory of articles found in the pocket of "the Man Mountain," particularly the description of his watch, which it was conjectured was his God, as he consulted it upon all occasions. He observed, that "Swift put his name to but two things, (after he had a name to put,) 'The Plan for the Improvement of the English Language,' and the last 'Drapier's Letter.'"

"From Swift, there was an easy transition to Mr. Thomas Sheridan.—JOHNSON. "Sheridan is a wonderful admirer of the tragedy of Douglas, and presented its author with a gold medal. Some years ago, at a coffee-house in Oxford, I called to him, 'Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Sheridan, how came you to give a gold medal to Home, for writing that foolish play?' This, you see, was wanton and insolent; but I *meant* to be wanton and insolent. A medal has no value but as a stamp of merit. And was Sheridan to assume to himself the right of giving that stamp? If Sheridan was magnificent enough to bestow a gold medal as an honorary reward of dramatic excellence, he should have requested one of the Universities to choose the person on whom it should be conferred. Sheridan had no right to give a stamp of merit: it was counterfeiting Apollo's coin."

In the paragraph immediately succeeding the above, if Mr. Boswell is right in his statement, the rigid stickler for truth not only encourages temporizing principles and duplicity, but, in certain cases of convenience, gives a latitude to perjury.

ADDENDA.

# A D D E N D A.

(a) *Preface*, p. vii. DR. JOHNSON's Biographer is of opinion, that the most minute singularities which belonged to him should not be omitted; one anecdote of that class, perhaps as unaccountable as any which he has related, with all his assiduity, has escaped him. It was communicated to the writer of this article by Mr. Sheridan, of which he himself had shortly after an opportunity of being an eye-witness. Mr. Sheridan at the time lived in Bedford-street opposite Henrietta-street, which ranges with the south side of Covent Garden, so that the prospect lies open the whole way free of interruption; we were standing together at the drawing-room window expecting Johnson who was to dine there. Mr. Sheridan asked me could I see the length of the garden. 'No, sir!' 'Take out your Opera-glass, Johnson is coming; you may know him by his gait.' I perceived him at a good distance working along with a peculiar solemnity of deportment, and an awkward sort of measured step; at that time the broad flagging on each side the streets was not universally adopted, and stone posts were in fashion to prevent the annoyance of carriages. Upon every post as he passed along, I could observe he deliberately laid his hand; but missing one of them, when he had got at some distance, he seemed suddenly to recollect himself, and immediately returning back, carefully performed the accustomed ceremony, and resumed his former course, not omitting one till he gained the crossing. This, Mr. Sheridan assured me, however odd it might appear, was his constant practice; but why or wherefore he could not inform me. . . Now for a dinner scene.

The house on the right at the bottom of Beaufort-buildings was occupied by Mr. Chamberlain; Mrs. Sheridan's

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eldest

eldest brother, by whom Johnson was often invited in the snug way with the family party. At one of those social meetings Johnson as usual sat next the lady of the house; the dessert still continuing, and the ladies in no haste to withdraw, Mrs. Chamberlaine had moved a little back from the table, and was carelessly dangling her foot backwards and forwards as she sat, enjoying the feast of reason and the flow of soul. Johnson the while in a moment of abstraction was convulsively working his hand up and down, which the lady observing, she roguishly edged her foot within his reach, and, as might partly have been expected, Johnson clenched hold of it, and drew off her shoe; she started, and hastily exclaimed, 'O, fy! Mr. Johnson!' The company at first knew not what to make of it; but one of them, perceiving the joke, tittered. Johnson, not improbably aware of the trick, apologized: 'Nay, madam, recollect yourself; I know not that I have justly incurred your rebuke; the emotion was involuntary, and the action not intentionally rude.'

On another occasion, the Relater of these Anecdotes, who at the time resided in the house along with his good friend, Mr. Chamberlaine, was near getting himself into a hobble: Going rather abruptly into the drawing-room, he found Dr. Lucas, Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Chamberlaine with two large folios on the table before them; Johnson's Dictionary, then but lately published. One of the volumes lay open, and popping his head in among them, the first word that caught his eye was Helter-skelter.' . . . 'Helter-skelter, from *Heolrten sceado*, the darkness of hell; hell being a place of confusion.' . . . 'That's a very far-fetched etymology,' cries the youngster; the three gentlemen seemed thunder-struck, and staring at him for a moment, cast a significant glance towards the window, where stood an odd looking figure.



figure, which he had not before noticed, observing the boats passing on the Thames. 'Twas Johnson! whom indeed he did not know, and luckily for him, he seemed wholly absorbed in his own contemplations. 'Well, young fir!' says Mr. Chamberlaine, again casting an eye towards the window, 'I suppose you can give a better derivation.' 'O yes, fir! in an instant; from the Latin; *bilariter celeriter*, merrily and swiftly: won't that do?' . . . No answer was made, but they hustled him out of the room as fast as they could; and afterwards, with some judicious animadversions on his temerity, our flippanit etymologist was made sensible how near he was getting, what perhaps he deserved, a good rap over the knuckles.

As one story often begets another, one little Anecdote more, and for the present we have done. . . . Mr. Chamberlaine, already mentioned, was a surgeon, eminent in his profession; for many a long year the Oracle of the Grecian coffee-house, and the delight of the young Templars, particularly from Ireland; for he was a humourist and dearly loved a quibble. In the year 1758, MR. WHYTE, of *Grafton-street, Dublin*, opened his Seminary for Education. Several of his friends honoured him with particular attention on the occasion, and, according to good old custom, made him presents towards house-keeping; among the rest Mr. Chamberlaine sent him a very handsome Tea-chest with an inscription on a silver plate neatly let into the lid,

"T U D O C E S,"

Thou teachest; a professional allusion, by construction in the dialect of punsters—thou tea-chest.

The Author of the *Curiosities of Literature*, printed Anno 1784, mentions a similar device, which, according to the relation, "has been lately given by the ingenious Harry Erskine, who inscribed on his Tea-chest the following words"—

"T U D O C E S."

"These,

“ These, however inapplicable they may appear, when translated into our vernacular tongue run thus——

“ T H O U T E A - C H E S T . ”

“ The second person singular of the verb, *docere*, making a very neat pun of the substantive Tea-chest.”

Cur. of Literature, London, vol. i. p. 564.

Mr. Chamberlaine has evidently the advantage of Mr. Erskine in two material points, viz. precedence as to time, and aptitude in the application: and after all, like most travelling Anecdotes, as Voltaire says of Columbus's Egg, it may have been told of others. So Wyllyam of Cloudeflé, a famous old English Archer, shot the apple off his son's head, before William Tell, the celebrated Swiss, was born. The same is recorded of one Tocho, a Goth.

‘ Psha ! ’ cries the critic, ‘ this is absolute trifling ; what in the name of common sense has all this to say to Johnson ? ’ Why nothing, sir ! it has nothing to say to Johnson : ’ tis a mere bagatelle, brought in head and shoulders, one scarce can tell why ; but before you censure, by way of apologue, apply it, and see if many of the stories seriously obtruded by Mr. Boswell, ay ! and by greater clerks than he, don't come precisely under the same description.

(1) page 13.—*Corporal notice, as meditated against the reprobated translator of Ossian*, . . . Mr. Boswell, who can seldom be accused of nationality, on the circumstance alluded to, says — ‘ at this time the controversy concerning the pieces published by Mr. James Macpherson, as translations of Ossian, was at its height. Johnson had all along denied their authenticity, and what was still more provoking to their admirers, maintained that they had no merit. The subject having been introduced by Dr. Fordyce, Dr. Blair, relying on the internal evidence of their antiquity, asked Dr. Johnson, whether he thought any man of modern age could

could have written such poems? Johnson replied, 'Yes, sir! many men, many women, and many children;' this is given as his serious opinion; but we are yet to learn, whether it is meant as a specimen of his venerated friend's judgment, or his inviolable regard to truth. It is certain however that Dr. Johnson plumed himself highly on his own sagacity on that occasion, as well as on the detection of the Cock-lane Ghost, which after all he did not detect;\* and maintained his assertions with an asperity of language unbecoming a philosopher: we shall venture to oppose him with a different opinion; an opinion which the Doctor himself might have bowed to without disparagement, though not accompanied with so much rage. Hear what Dr. Young says in his memoir relating to those poems; addressed to the Royal Irish Academy, of which that gentleman is a distinguished member, and one of its brightest ornaments. He also made a tour to the Highlands.

"The

\* Boswell in his accustomed mode of prefacing, with a pompous flourish on his illustrious friend's sagacity, vol. i. pp. 370, 1, 2, gives the tale of this famous detection as it appeared in the Public Papers, written by the Sage himself, setting forth, in substance, as follows: that he, assisted by many others of rank and character, paid a visit to a little girl, supposed to be disturbed by a spirit, and having examined the matter with a jealous attention, did ask certain questions, which the said ghost, as we may well presume, not conceiving itself obliged to answer interrogatories, did not think convenient to reply to; upon which the gentlemen, who thus examined the evidence, being satisfied of its falsity (not having uttered a single syllable) came to the following resolution, which, referring to the statement, verbatim runs thus:

"It is, therefore, the opinion of the whole assembly, that the child has some art of making or counterfeiting a particular noise, and that there is no agency of any higher cause."

He was of opinion it was a trick, and so were thousands besides; but what the particular art or contrivance of the little female Breslaw was, remains in its pristine obscurity to this day. Call you that detection?

"The great interest which has for many years been taken in the controversy concerning the authenticity of Mr. M'Pherson's Ossian, made me desirous of collecting all the information in my power, during my excursion through the Scottish Highlands in the Summer of 1784. The following poems are part of the collection which I made at the time; and notwithstanding Mr. Hill has done so much towards bringing this warmly-contested question to a decided issue; I imagined they might throw some new additional light on the subject. I have therefore ventured to lay them before the Academy, with translations and a few explanatory notes."

"Mr. M'Pherson is by many supposed to be the sole and original Author of the Compositions which he has published as translations of the Works of Ossian; this charge I am enabled to refute, at least in part, having fortunately met with the Originals of some of them. Mr. M'Pherson, I acknowledge, hath taken very great liberties with them; retrenching, adding and altering as he judged proper: but we must admit that he has discovered great ingenuity in these variations."

And speaking of his own translation he farther says. . . .  
 "Upon the whole, I believe no errors of material consequence have escaped me; but if there be such, the originals are at hand, by which they may be corrected; some of which," he tells us, "are current in Ireland, and to be seen amongst the Irish Manuscripts in the Library of the College of Dublin."

Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin 1787,  
 Vol. i. under the head of Antiquities, page 43 passim.

An Irishman, we see, has candour and honesty enough to acknowledge merit and do justice to Mr. Macpherson, while his countryman Boswell complaisantly abandons the cause,  
 and



and joins issue with his adversary. Dr. Johnson, whatever he might really think of Swift, would hardly call this gentleman "a very shallow fellow:" but he was a particular man, and there is no swearing what he might be tempted to.

Mr. Macpherson, it seems, having heard of some illiberal attacks on his character made behind his back by Dr. Johnson, thought fit to remonstrate by letter, which letter is however conveniently kept out of sight, so that we are left to imagine the contents; a strong foundation for doubts and surmises, where a point was to be gained. Mr. Boswell, as you are to suppose, scrupulously accurate in his account, gives us verbatim the sage's reply; the substance of which, conveyed in very apposite terms, is that he would cudgel him. Mr. Boswell's illustrious friend appears now upon the stage in a new character, and his minute Biographer is at some pains to convince his readers, that he was no less able than willing to perform it; "for having provided himself with a proper implement, I have no doubt," saith his paper champion, "but he would have made his corporal prowess be felt as much as his intellectual." To put the matter beyond controversy, as deeds speak louder than words, he corroborates his opinion by the relation of some half dozen instances; several of them ludicrous enough, of which, courteous Reader! if haply thou hast not seen the book, the following will give thee a delectable idea.

"In the Play-house at Lichfield, Johnson having quitted a chair that was placed for him behind the scenes, a gentleman took possession of it, and on Johnson's return, rudely refused to give it up; Johnson laid hold of it, and tossed him and the chair into the pit." . . . The gentleman could not, one should think, be *very rudely* disposed, who could

so

so complaisantly sit quiet, and without struggle submit to so unceremonious and awkward an exhibition. And, considering the uncouthness of the vehicle, and the distance they must have been at from the front of the stage, which the great man had to carry the audacious usurper, together with the width of the orchestra, to say nothing of the Doctor's visual incapacity and the elevation of the chevaux-de-frise between that and the pit, I think we may fairly cry, bounce! . . . There are moreover a few little items growing out of the question; as the trespass upon decency and the respect due to the audience, some of whom might have materially suffered under the pressure of such an unexpected intrusion; and, as they could not well be master of the jest, judging by appearances, they might have been prompted to espouse the quarrel of the party aggrieved, and in the way of summary justice have shown Goliath a trick worth two of it. In a neighbouring kingdom not improbably it would have passed for sheer fun; they order matters better in Britain. It was a manifest breach of the peace, and cognizable by another jurisdiction, to which the gentleman most likely would have resorted. We have a case very much in point before us. . . *Vide* the master of Auchenleck's reports, vol. ii. p. 171.—Johnson versus Macpherson. . . "Any violence offered I shall do my best to repel, and what I cannot do for myself the law shall do for me. I hope I shall never be deterred from detecting what I think a cheat by the menaces of a ruffian."—The plea of refusing a chair, we apprehend, would have appeared but a lame excuse, before a jury, for a fractured skull or a dislocated limb. What says Mr. Boswell? he is a lawyer; is the case altered? 'Nay, sir! Johnson; Johnson, sir! may say or do any thing.'

What

What effect Mr. Boswell's intimidating picture of Johnson produced on the mind of Macpherson we are not told; probably it never transpired; that it would have been laughed at by Sheridan numbers of his contemporaries yet living, I think, will readily believe. Records, no less authentic than Mr. Boswell's, are in being, which greatly favour the presumption; the picture they afford of him may be no unsuitable companion to hang up with that of Johnson, and though but a sketch, in the eye of a connoisseur, will hardly appear to disadvantage.

It must in the first place be honestly confessed that we have no instance on record of Sheridan's excellency at club-law; cudgel-playing was not his forte. The gentlemen of his country are wont to resort to other weapons, a custom, every thinking creature must acknowledge, more honoured in the breach than the observance, at which, however, if it were his cue to fight, Johnson would have had but little chance. The records before referred to, mention one or two notorious facts; which Mr. Boswell, as they tend to illustrate his kind friend's true character, probably never honoured with a perusal. It is there said, that when some captious blades, the leaders of a desperate party, wantonly attacked him in his profession, stepping forward, he answered their outrage publicly from the stage, with the most becoming spirit and propriety: This so exasperated the principal ringleader, that he afterwards rushed in behind the scenes, and forced his way to his dressing-room, where he met with the chastisement his brutal arrogance richly deserved.

And now the Lawyers came in for their share of the quarrel. The Gentleman who began the affair was taken up for assaulting Mr. Sheridan, and Mr. Sheridan was indicted for assaulting and beating the Gentleman, . . . Nobody at that time

would believe, that a Jury could be found in Dublin that would find a Gentleman guilty. However they were mistaken. . . . Lord Chief Justice Marlay, who presided on the bench, was the decided supporter of order and decorum. Packed juries had no business in his court; and the sheriffs, agreeable to their instructions, could impanel none but able and sufficient jurors, at their peril.

The day of trial came on. . . . Mr. Sheridan appeared as the first culprit, and was tried for assaulting and beating the Gentleman, as Mr. Kelly was constantly called in the dispute. But it appearing fully to the Jury, on the oaths of three or four men, whose honesty was unquestionable, that the Gentleman gave the Manager such abusive and provoking language in his dressing-room, as compelled him to beat him out of it, and that no other person touched him, the Jury acquitted the prisoner without going out of the box.

Then the Gentleman appeared at the bar. . . . In the course of the trial Mr. Sheridan was called upon the table, and, while he was answering the questions proposed to him, a very eminent though not a very mannerly counsellor, on the side of the prisoner, said, "he wanted to see a curiosity; I have often seen, continued he, a gentleman soldier, and a gentleman taylor, but I have never seen a gentleman player." Mr. Sheridan, without the least embarrassment, modestly bowed, and said, "Sir, I hope you see one now." A loud murmur of applause ran through the court, and the counsellor, notwithstanding his effrontery, sat down abashed, and never asked him another question. . . . In short, the JURY found the GENTLEMAN prisoner guilty, and the sentence was a *fine of five hundred pounds, and three months imprisonment.*

The



The following paragraph is added, not so much as it respects Mr. Sheridan, as for the useful lesson it conveys to those who are fond of rushing into scrapes, and shews, in the hour of difficulty, what reliance they can have on friends who are involved in a bad cause.

This Mr. Kelly, when the law-suit commenced, imagined he should be liberally supported, and hundreds subscribed to carry it on; but upon conviction he found himself wholly deserted, and after suffering some time in confinement, became so thoroughly sensible of his error, that at last he was obliged to apply to Mr. Sheridan, who instantly solicited Government to relinquish the fine of 500*l.* which was granted him, and he became solicitor and bail himself to the Court of King's Bench for the enlargement of the Gentleman.

Thus, ample redress was procured for the Manager and Actors, by obtaining that respect to be paid to the scenes of the Theatre-Royal in Dublin, which no other Theatre, till then, had the happiness to maintain: for, from that hour, not even the first man of quality in the kingdom ever asked or attempted to get behind the scenes; and before that happy æra, every person who was master of a sword, was sure to draw it on the stage door-keeper, if he denied him entrance. And thus was the long usurped tyranny of a set of wanton and dissolute gentlemen (the greatest nuisance that any city ever groaned under) effectually subdued, and the rights of the more decent and orderly part of the community recovered by the spirit and firmness of the Manager, judicially seconded by a worthy Lord Chief Justice and an honest Jury.

This is but a very brief abstract of Hitchcock's relation of the facts at large, incorporated into his work, from the  
-history

history of the time given by Mr. Victor, a gentleman of learning and unimpeached veracity, who was himself present, and a party concerned in the several transactions related. The trial is on record, and numbers of living witnesses can justify the Facts. Besides the present purpose, it also shews how very unlikely Sheridan was to bear unnoticed that wanton insolence, mentioned on another occasion, with which Doctor Johnson boasted he intentionally treated his old friend in a public coffee-house at Oxford. . . . See Boswell, vol. i. pp. 204, 5.

If I have been prolix on this occasion, the admirers of Mr. Boswell must allow, it was with a good example before me. It was not however to exalt a favourite at the expence of others, but simply to do justice and set an injured character in a proper point of view.

(2) page 16.—*Dr. Johnson had been tried and found wanting.* . . . “He accepted of an offer to be employed as usher in the school of Market Bosworth, and after a few months he relinquished a situation which all his life afterwards he recollected with the strongest aversion, and even a degree of horror.” . . . [Boswell, vol. i. pp. 5, 690.] . . . “He set up a private academy at Edial, near his native city; but the only pupils that were ever put under his care were the celebrated David Garrick, his brother George, and a Mr. Offely. . . . But he was no more satisfied with his situation as Master of an Academy, than that of the Usher of a School, and did not keep it above a year and a half.” [Ibid. pp. 72, 73.] Again, “He felt the hardship of writing for bread, and was therefore willing to resume the office of a School-master.” Accordingly we find his friends soliciting for him a Master of Arts’ Degree, to qualify him for a Free School of 60l. per Ann. in Shropshire. . . . Pope recommended him to Earl Gower, who

who endeavoured to procure for him a Degree from Dublin, by a letter (which is in print) to a friend of Dean Swift, entreating him to use his interest with the Dean, "to persuade the University of Dublin to send a Diploma to him [Earl Gower] constituting this poor man Master of Arts in their University." [Ibid. pp. 107, 8, 9, 10.] . . . His disappointment in this last attempt has been imputed partly to some negligence or remissness of Swift's, on the bare supposition of which, for it no where was ever proved, Johnson could never afterwards endure him. Now on the other hand, changing situations and supposing the case Swift's, and that he had persisted in such contumelious treatment of Johnson, Mr. Boswell with perfect composure would say, "I have no feeling for such persevering resentment;" or possibly in his more splenetic moments he might have had recourse to his favourite expedient, "the lash of wit."

Neither was Sheridan wanting in Academic honours. He was Master of Arts in three of the most learned Universities of Europe, Oxford, Cambridge and Dublin; in the latter of which, his Alma-Mater, he was regularly matriculated, and obtained the distinction in due course of gradation, where the qualifications are by no means trifling, and the examinations singularly severe. . . . In the year 1758 he paid a visit in his literary capacity to Oxford, and immediately on his arrival in that renowned seat of eminent professors, he was distinguished with unusual attention; and on Tuesday November 28th, was admitted in congregation to the degree of Master of Arts. In a subsequent visit soon after to the sister University, Cambridge, he experienced the like honourable reception, and had the same degree conferred on him there also. At Edinburgh he was honoured with the Freedom of the City, which was presented to him by the  
hands

hands of Dr. Robertson, the celebrated professor of history, &c. This is scarcely compatible with the idea of Sheridan, which Mr. Boswell endeavours to impress upon the minds of his readers, on the authority of the irrefragable Doctor.

In the European Magazine for December 1788, p. 410, we are told, Mr. Sheridan's first appearance on the Stage was on the 20th of January 1743. In this statement there is a small mistake, probably an error of the press. Mr. Hitchcock, from whose Work the account is taken, p. 128, says: "On the 29th of January 1742—3, the part of Richard was attempted by a young gentleman at Smock-alley Theatre. This attempt succeeded beyond the most sanguine expectations of the friends of our young candidate for fame, and equalled any first essay ever remembered by the oldest performers on the Irish Stage. Thus encouraged, our adventurer a few days after undertook the character of Mithridates in the Tragedy of that name; in which he so amply confirmed public opinion, that he threw off the disguise, and was shortly after announced to the town for a second performance of Richard, by the name of Mr. Sheridan. . . . . Like Garrick he at first shone forth a finished Actor, and at once attained the heights which many others spend years in labouring to gain. . . . . Mr. Sheridan was born in the year 1719, and early discovering signs of genius, was at a proper age sent to Westminster-school, where he remained till he was prepared to enter the University of Dublin. After going through his studies with great eclat, and taking his degrees, he quitted College. . . . The profession he embraced, involved the greatest part of his life in a perpetual round of anxious toil, and unceasing fatigue, wherein he experienced every species of ingratitude and perfidy."

The



The conductor of the periodic work, cited in the preceding paragraph, speaking of Mr. Sheridan, p. 327, says :—" About 1764 he went to France, and took up his residence at Blois by order of his Majesty, as has been asserted," and for this assertion, he quotes the correspondence of Wilkes and Horne, p. 76. The Author of the *Biographia Dramatica*, article Sheridan, also alledges the same reason, his Majesty's order, for Mr. Sheridan's retiring to France. Upon what principle his Majesty should have interfered in the business, or for what end such a notion was propagated, I am at a loss to explain. It was the persecution of his merciless creditors that drove him thither, as was stated in the application to the Irish House of Commons, not his Majesty's order; and that Mr. Sheridan could in any wise have authorized such an idle report is sufficiently refuted by his letters.

In those Memoirs of his Life, by no means ill written, it is also asserted, that " in 1776 he acted several nights at Covent Garden; after this he never performed again as an Actor." This is another proof among thousands how little is known in England of what is really going on in the sister kingdom, and affords a useful lesson, not to rely with implicit confidence on the accounts given of foreign transactions and more remote periods. Mr. Sheridan performed as an Actor in Dublin in the year 1776 and 1777. He never played as a salary performer; but from a principle of equity, relying solely upon his own powers, after he quitted the helm, and without laying the manager under any difficulties, he played always on shares, and without any tie on either side, but that of mutual advantage. The following account of what accrued singly to Mr. Sheridan from his performance, within the space of nine months, four of which the house was shut, during his

his last campaign in Dublin, corroborates our assertion, and proves to demonstration the estimation he was held in.

*Theatre Royal, Crow-street,—Mr. Sheridan's dividends.*

1776, June 15	Hamlet	-	-	40	1	11
20	King Lear	-	-	36	16	6
25	Cato	-	-	41	15	9
30	Richard the 3d	-	-	43	0	0
Novem. 11	King Lear	-	-	43	6	11½
18	Earl of Essex	-	-	28	7	11½
22	Double Dealer	-	-	24	7	9½
25	Cato	-	-	31	14	7
29	Richard the 3d	-	-	19	6	2½
Decem. 2	Hamlet	-	-	39	19	0
6	Double Dealer	-	-	19	2	2
9	Merchant of Venice	-	-	39	12	9
16	Provoked Husband	-	-	45	2	2
20	Merchant of Venice	-	-	24	11	0½
1777, Jan. 27	King John	-	-	48	19	4
31	Roman Father	-	-	37	12	11
February 3	King John	-	-	34	2	9½
7	Macbeth	-	-	47	14	11½
10	Cato	-	-	14	8	5½
14	Careless Husband (*)	-	-	106	15	10
24	Macbeth	-	-	38	5	8
28	King John	-	-	3	10	11½
March 5	Merchant of Venice	-	-	29	3	1½
7	Henry the 8th	-	-	7	6	3
14	Hamlet (*)	-	-	121	8	4

Total accruing to Mr. Sheridan £966 13 5

Nearly 40l. per night, upon an average, including two Benefits. (\*) Adventitious circumstances in his favour there were none; novelty, that most powerful charm, was utterly out

out of the question; Mr. Sheridan was in an advanced period of life, near sixty; thirty-five years of which he had spent in the service of the Public, and of that time by far the greatest part in Dublin, his native city, where of course his appearance was familiar. The Theatre, was not then in the first style of fashionable amusements; consequently in its wane, and the company by no means a strong one: add to this the acting proprietor's private distresses, and the disadvantages he laboured under as to the collateral aids of music and decorations, and it must be allowed, such signal evidence of public attention, produced by the sole attraction of an individual, is a confirmation of no common merit.

He afterwards went to the country for his health, and played the summer season in Cork, with equal advantage to his reputation, and proportionally superior in point of profit; yet the author of the *Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Sheridan*, already cited, assures us he played at Covent Garden, in the year 1776, "and never after this performed again as an actor." So much for the faith of History!

The preceding account of the emolument arising to Mr. Sheridan, from his twenty-five nights of performance, was communicated to the writer by Samuel Guinness, Esq. Mr. Sheridan's confidential friend on the occasion, who received the money for him, whose return, in his own handwriting, now lies before me, from which the above is literally copied. It is also to be farther observed, in justice to Mr. Ryder, then Manager, that on account of the low state of his company, having no capital performer, particularly in the tragic line, to second him, the expence of the House, which was generally rated at sixty pound a night, was reduced, and charged only fifty pound a night to Mr. Sheridan.

The following is the advertisement of his last appearance in *Hamlet*, above mentioned, announced as usual in Faulkner's,

the Freeman's, and the Hibernian Journal, in which not one additional name appears to enhance the representation, from which a pretty adequate idea may be formed of the strength, or rather weakness, of the company.

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FOR THE BENEFIT OF MR. SHERIDAN.

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*THEATRE-ROYAL, CROW-STREET.*

THIS EVENING,  
FRIDAY, MARCH THE 14TH, 1777,

WILL BE PRESENTED THE TRAGEDY OF

H A M L E T.

THE PART OF HAMLET BY MR. SHERIDAN,

BEING POSITIVELY THE LAST NIGHT OF HIS PERFORMING  
THIS SEASON.

TO WHICH WILL BE ADDED,

T H E C I T I Z E N.

YOUNG PHILPOT MR. RYDER.

BEFORE THE FARCE, A PRELUDE.

MARIA IN THE CITIZEN, AND THE LADY IN  
THE PRELUDE, MISS BARSANTI.

*After the Play Mr. Sheridan, by desire, will recite*

DRYDEN'S CELEBRATED

ODE ON THE POWER OF MUSIC.

PLACES FOR THE BOXES TO BE TAKEN OF MR. CULLEN.

THE HOUSE TO BE ILLUMINATED WITH WAX.

By



By way of contrast, let us now turn our eyes, for a moment, on another period of Theatric history. The retrospect is not void of utility; it is perfectly consonant to our subject, and cannot but be interesting to the amateur.

The Theatre in Crow-street, Dublin, was erected under the auspices of Spranger Barry, Esq. in opposition to Sheridan. Monday the 23d of October 1758, the house opened with the Kind Impostor, a Comedy by Cibber, under the conduct of Messrs. Barry and Woodward, joint Managers; and Mr. Sheridan, who was then in England, from some heavy losses and disappointments he had sustained, declining to come over, Smock-alley was in no condition to make head against them, so that success and fortune seemed wholly at their devotion. They had the advantage of novelty in all points; a new and splendid Theatre; a rich and capital wardrobe, a select and well-appointed company, an excellent band, their own personal consequence, youth, beauty, and every imaginable attraction in their favour. Mr. Barry, one of the finest and most interesting figures in nature, at the acme of his profession in the Tragic walk, was scarcely turned of forty, and Woodward, with his coffers full of guineas, a no less distinguished favourite in the Comic scene, in the meridian of life. Mrs. Dancer [the celebrated Mrs. Crawford] rapidly rising into fame; Mrs. Fitzhenry in her zenith; Mrs. Jefferson, and a long *et cetera* of accomplished heroines, one should think, of themselves sufficient to ensure their triumph; accordingly the close of the season saw the new Managers in unrivalled possession, exulting in the plenitude of Theatric power. But it is the succeeding season we have now more immediately in view. In the opinion of the most discerning moral and political writers, the dearest interests of society are influenced by the state of public amusements,

amusements, and the flourishing condition of a Theatre is considered as one of the strongest proofs of the civilization and prosperity of a people. The season referred to, commencing with the Winter of the year 1759, and ending in 1760, is described as one of the most brilliant and successful ever known with Ireland, and for that reason, the most worthy of notice; besides, the Author, having by a singular accident obtained the only authentic document on the subject, has it in his power, not only to ascertain to a shilling the gross amount of the money received that memorable season, but farther to gratify curiosity with a specification of the particular receipts of fourteen of their most splendid exhibitions.

The Managers having successfully completed their recruiting business in England, and along with other capital acquisitions, having added Mr. Mossop to their forces, who was then, as Davies says, esteemed in London the sheet-anchor of Tragedy, and the reigning favourite next to Garrick, they returned with expectations as sanguine and as flattering as the warmest fancy could suggest. That those expectations were founded on reason and probability, will be seen by a slight review of their recommendations. Their company, as Hitchcock not unwarrantably describes it, was, perhaps, the strongest, and best formed, of any hitherto beheld in Ireland. High in public favour, their credit established, a new Theatre, an excellent wardrobe; they had every advantage which could be derived from a combination of circumstances so fortunate. To crown these, and give animation to the whole, they were in a very eminent degree possessed of every influence which the court could give. Robert Wood, Esq. then Master of the Revels, in this kingdom, appointed Mr. Barry and Mr. Woodward, his deputies, by which Crow-street became the Theatre-Royal. He also conferred upon them the office of directors of his Majesty's  
Band;

Band; a post indeed of more honour than profit. The Duke of Dorset then Lord Lieutenant, who was remarkably popular, and the Ducheſs, were peculiarly fond of the Theatre, and honoured it with their preſence generally once or twice a week during the ſeaſon.

Thus powerfully prepared, they took the field, and the houſe opened Wednesday, October 3d, 1759. Every thing ſeemed to wear a propitious aſpect at the New Theatre-Royal, Crow-ſtreet; neither pains nor expence was ſpared in preparing the pieces for representation. The Tragedies were got up in a ſtyle of ſuperior ſplendour. The expence of the mere guards in *Coriolanus* amounted to £3. 10. per night. The guards and chorus ſingers in *Alexander* to 81. The acting of the Tragedies was firſt rate. The force of the two heroes of the buſkin, (and never were two tragedians of ſuch uncommon excellence whoſe abilities better accorded) was aided by the powerful attractions of Mrs. Dancer and Mrs. Fitzhenry. A ſpecimen or two will ſhew the ſtrength of their representations: as, *Othello*, Mr. Barry; *Roderigo*, Mr. Woodward; *Caffio*, Mr. Dexter; *Brabantio*, Mr. Walker; *Iago*, Mr. Moſſop; *Deſdemona*, Mrs. Dancer; and *Emilia*, Mrs. Fitzhenry. *Venice Preſerved*: *Pierre*, Mr. Moſſop; *Jaffier*, Mr. Barry; *Belvidera*, Mrs. Dancer. In *Jane Shore*: *Haftings*, Barry; *Dumont*, Moſſop; *Jane Shore*, Mrs. Dancer; *Alicia*, Mrs. Fitzhenry. All for Love: *Anthony*, Barry; *Dolabella*, Dexter; *Ventidius*, Moſſop; *Octavia*, Mrs. Dancer; *Cleopatra*, Mrs. Fitzhenry. Theſe, with Mr. Woodward's excellent Pantomines, brought out in the higheſt perfection, were deſerving every encouragement. Almoſt every night produced ſome novelty; and ſometime before the cloſe of the ſeaſon, Mrs. Abington, that elegant and fashionable Actreſs, as Boſwell juſtly ſtyles her in his life of Johnson, joined the ſtandards of Crow-ſtreet.

Mr.

Mr. William Barry, the Manager's brother, was Treasurer to the Theatre; his receipt-book is now in my possession, from which the following account of the receipts of the season of 1759, 60, is extracted; from a view of which, compared with what Sheridan alone drew in the last year of his performance, it must be necessarily admitted, that the accounts given of his theatrical consequence, however depreciated by Johnson and Boswell, are not exaggerated.

1760, June 4th, Produce of 163 plays acted

this season, per Treasurer's Book	£ 1162	13	6½
From Government for three plays	-	90	0 0
Ditto . . . . . one play	-	22	15 0
Total amount, Governmt. plays included,	£ 11734	8	6½

Receipts of the last 14 Plays, viz.

May 7, <i>Barbarossa</i> , Mossop's Benefit	133	11	6
9, <i>Winter's Tale</i>	-	109	19 2
10, <i>Julius Cæsar</i>	-	94	10 5
12, <i>Winter's Tale</i>	-	40	17 11
14, <i>Julius Cæsar</i> , 2d night	-	30	15 4
16, <i>Conscious Lovers</i> , F. Mafons' Nt.	149	0	3
17, <i>Recruiting Officer</i> , Command	57	18	1
19, <i>Double Dealer</i>	-	12	15 8
22, <i>Provoked Husband</i> , Mrs. Abington	129	4	10
23, <i>Othello</i>	-	59	7 4
28, <i>Richard the Third</i>	-	29	12 7
29, <i>Earl of Essex</i>	-	65	3 3½
30, <i>The Revenge</i> ✓	-	45	7 10
June 4, Committee, Government Play	4	6	8
For ditto, from Government	22	15	0

Total produce of 14 plays - £ 985 5 10½

Advantage on the side of Sheridan 683 19 1½

Amount of Sheridan's 14 nights, per contra £ 1669 5 0

Receipts



# A D D E N D A.

71

Receipts of 25 plays in which Mr. Sheridan was concerned the last year of his performance in Dublin, taken from the books of the theatre, under the management of Ryder.

1776, June 15, Hamlet	-	130	3	10
20, King Lear		123	13	0
25, Cato	-	133	11	6
30, Richard the Third		136	0	0
Nov. 11, King Lear		136	13	11
18, Earl of Essex		106	15	11
22, Double Dealer		98	15	7
25, Cato	-	113	9	2
29, Richard the Third		88	12	5
Dec. 2, Hamlet	-	129	18	0
6, Double Dealer		88	4	4
Produce of 11 plays				- £ 1285 17 8
9, Merch. of Venice		129	5	6
16, Provoked Husband		140	4	4
20, Merch. of Venice		99	2	1
1777, Jan. 27, King John	-	147	18	8
31, Roman Father		125	5	10
Feb. 3, King John		118	5	7
7, Macbeth		145	9	11
10, Cato	-	78	16	11
14, Careless H. Benefit		156	15	10
24, Macbeth		126	11	4
28, King John		57	1	11
March 5, Merch. of Venice		108	6	3
7, Henry the Eighth		64	12	6
14, Hamlet, Benefit		171	8	4
Amount of 14 plays				- £ 1669 5 0
Total amount of Sheridan's 25 nights				£ 2955 2 8
				Thus

Thus Mr. Sheridan, even in life's decline, and the no less declining state of the Drama, unsupported as he was, in fourteen nights drew 683l. 19s. 1dh. or 48l. 10s. per night, more than in the same number of nights was produced by the united powers of Crow-street, in one of the most brilliant seasons, according to theatric annals, ever known in Ireland. Should it be said that the receipts of Mr. Sheridan's nights are enhanced by two benefits, it must be also observed that the other party had three, and those Mr. Mossop's, Mrs. Abington's, and the Freemasons', with the superaddition of a Command, to counter-balance them. Mr. Sheridan, on an average, acted to houses of upwards of 118l. per night, by which he put about twenty-six guineas per night into his own purse, exclusive of his benefits. The New Crow-street Luminaries, one night with another, computing on the whole, did not bring quite seventy-two pounds per night, which, rating any one of them on the same scale with Sheridan, or all of them successively, at half the profits after fifty pound, with all their exertions and every other fortunate circumstance combined, would not produce ten guineas per night to the individual.

Mr. Sheridan, however, who had incurred an enormous load of debt in his endeavours to reform and establish the Dublin Theatre, was ruined in the first stage of the opposition, and his opponents did not long enjoy their triumph. After four years constant anxiety, fatigue and trouble, in the year 1762, Mr. Woodward returned to his native country with the loss of the greatest part of his fortune, obliged to begin the world again.\* Barry held out a little longer; but  
in

\* The summer season ensuing Woodward came again to Dublin, and, in hopes of picking up a few guineas, joined the corps of Smock-alley; but though his first appearance was announced for a Public Charity, the good people of Dublin, offended at some unguarded expressions in his Prologue on his appearance in Drury-lane the winter before, would not suffer him to go on with his part. This at once put an end to his expectations in that country, from which he immediately departed, never more to return.

In his avarice of conquest he had brought over a rod to whip himself, which, the season after, took root, and for a time held up its head and flourished in Smock-alley; the two houses were again embroiled in competition, and violent were the contentions betwixt the Capulets and the Montagues.

At length, the superiour genius of Mossop prevailed. After seven years contest, Mr. Barry was obliged to resign the field to his then seemingly more fortunate rival; having, during that time, experienced more chagrin, vexation, and disappointment than imagination can well conceive. Harassed in mind and body, he had lavished so many years of the prime of his life, and instead, of reaping the fruits of such shining abilities as Nature had blessed him with, had incurred debts he could never discharge, ruined many persons connected with him, and involved himself in difficulties, which, during the remainder of his life, he could never surmount.

His, I cannot call him more successful, competitor, was not in a much more enviable situation. His finances were also greatly deranged, his credit impaired, and his resources nearly exhausted. After a few years fruitless struggle, his spirits sunk under the pressure of accumulated misfortunes; and a severe illness prevented his appearing on the stage. In this distressed situation, he was obliged to solicit the generosity of the Public he had so often delighted, and a play was announced for his Benefit, in which he was not able to perform. The Benefit was fixed for the 17th of April, 1771, which, though the house was crowded, afforded him but a temporary relief. His affairs were so desperate, it was next to an impossibility for any efforts to retrieve them, and in despair he relinquished Crow-street to his rivals. He was soon after arrested in London, and committed to the King's Bench; where, in spite of all the efforts of his friends, he was condemned to endure a long and severe confinement, and though he was at last liberated, various and insurmount-

able difficulties prevented his ever again displaying to the Public those abilities that merited a better fate. Mossop, in company with Edward Smith, of Jubilee, Esq. his countryman and fellow collegian, after that made the tour of Europe; but neither change of climate, nor the consolations of friendship, could *minister to a mind diseased, or pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow*. November 1773, in great poverty, at a miserable lodging in Chelsea, he died of a broken heart.

The stories of Victor, and Sowdon, and Brown, and Dawson, and Ryder,\* successively exhibit but a repetition of similar

\* Mr. RYDER's father's name was *Preswick Ryder*, an Irishman, and for some time a considerable Printer and Bookseller in Dublin. He was obliged to abscond on his printing an inflammatory pamphlet against Government, a Proclamation having been issued, and a Reward of One Thousand Pounds offered, for apprehending him. He took on him the name of *Darby* (his wife's name) and for many years was an itinerant Comedian in England, where RYDER and his brother *Samuel* were born. RYDER played at Edinburgh and several towns in England by that name; but resumed his real one some time before he came to this kingdom. The first and second years of his management in Dublin, he met with great success, and received vast sums of money, exclusive of 3000l. he got in the Exchange Scheme, a Lottery grafted on a Dutch one. Notwithstanding which, though no person ever could charge him with being an extravagant man, he, by the Vicissitude of Time, and a Falling-off of Theatrical business, became bankrupt, and afterwards quit this for some years, and played in London, Edinburgh, &c. On his return to Dublin in 1791, he was in such a state of health, as required him to be in the country. The means were wanting. To support a wife and four children also required the assistance of Friends. One of whom (the Printer of this Work) happy in an opportunity of any way contributing to the relief of an old and worthy Friend, had him removed to his house in *Sandymount*, near Dublin, where he was comfortably supported, and respectful attention paid to him by himself and his family; and at times, when every exertion has been made, and every nerve strained, to rouse him from despondence, and divert the sense of affliction that preyed upon his mind, and under which he lamentably sunk, he would sigh heavily, and say, "Oh, MARCHBANK! they have broke my heart." On Saturday, November 27, 1791, he was released from his troubles, and on the Wednesday following he was buried in *Drumcondra* Church-yard, attended by many of his Friends, whose regard, alas! died with him;—no Monument or Grave-stone tells where his remains lie.



similar scenes of embarrassment and distress; who, in their turn, sunk under the weight of calamity, and finished, like Moslop, a miserable existence in obscurity and want. . . .

Here is room for meditation. Fond, unthinking youth! be advised: trust not the fallacious allurements of the stage; it is a wilderness of thorns and quicksands, which affords no reasonable hopes of escaping; for, though a few who were native there, and to the manner born, may seem exceptions, it is indeed a comfortless situation for adventurers of a different class. The men whose catastrophe you have just perused, were most of them born to better prospects, richly endowed by nature, of extraordinary talents, highly improved by education, and had attained to the summit of the profession; yet disappointment and misery were their portion.

Upon the whole, in respect to the subject of our present enquiry, two inferences may be deduced:

1st. If Mr. Sheridan could have reconciled it to his principles of honour, and his prudence (bought by woeful experience) to run the risk of involving himself, and the fortunes of his friends, in the contest; with his abilities, aided by the strong support of an excellent private character, he might possibly have postponed the evil day, and turned the tables on his adversaries.

2d. The attempts of Dr. Johnson to depreciate the talents and abilities of his good old friend, as handed down to posterity by Boswell, were unsupported by facts, and neither do honour to his judgment or his heart.

† p. 374. *Faulkner, whom he looked on, &c.* } The Writer of  
 || p. 384, *The paragragh told prettily, &c.* } the Memoirs of  
 Mr. Sheridan's Life, given in the European Magazine,  
 Anno 1788, informs his readers, that "The following Anecdote appeared in the English News-papers about the year

1768."

1768," and adds, "we give it on that authority, and in the very words, without vouching for the truth of it, though we believe it may be depended upon:—Last year Mr. Sheridan, the actor, obtained an Irish Act of Parliament, protecting him from arrests on account of his debts in Dublin, amounting to sixteen hundred pounds; and having this season saved eight hundred pounds, he gave notice that he was ready to pay his creditors ten shillings in the pound, and desired them to call on him for that purpose, with an account of their respective demands. Mr. Faulkner, the printer of one of the Dublin papers, was one of his creditors. This gentleman told Mr. Sheridan, that he would not trouble him with his demand till he dined with him: Mr. Sheridan accordingly called at Mr. Faulkner's; and after dinner Mr. Faulkner put a sealed paper into his hand, which he told him contained his demand, at the same time requesting Mr. Sheridan to examine it at his leisure at home: when he came home he found, under seal, a bond of his for two hundred pounds, due to Mr. Faulkner, cancelled, together with a receipt in full of a book debt, to the extent of one hundred pounds.—Whether is the conduct of the actor or printer the more generous and laudable?

This paragraph contains a jumble of circumstances ill understood, garnished with others that had no existence but in the writer's imagination. . . . . At the close of the season, in May 1758, Mr. Sheridan went to London, to collect forces for the next Winter's campaign; but in the event of some adverse occurrences, finding himself unable for the present to stem the tide of opposition, disgusted with the ill-treatment of his fellow citizens, and weary of a profession he never cordially relished, he relinquished the management of Smock-alley, and remained in England for the five succeeding years. During that interval he supported himself and family, whom at no time he neglected, in a style of genteel independence.

independence,\* chiefly by his literary exertions, and remitted to Mr. Sheen, his brother-in-law, in Dublin, about five hundred pounds, which was divided among such of his creditors as applied in consequence of an advertisement in the public papers several times repeated. In 1763, the Earl, afterwards Duke, of Northumberland, was appointed to the Government of Ireland. This, Mr. Sheridan, having the honour of being known to his Excellency, and still panting for his native home, considered as an auspicious event, and accordingly prepared for his return; on Saturday November the 5th, he arrived in Dublin, having first obtained a Letter of Licence from the majority of his creditors, in which it was stipulated, he should pay into Trustees' hands for their use, one half of whatever he should acquire, by acting or otherwise, during his stay there, with limitation for two years. Barry invited him to his house as his guest, where for a short time he took up his quarters, and, pursuant to agreement, the Friday following, November 11th, played Hamlet to 185l. 4s. 4d. which, sharing half the profits after 60l. as settled for each night of his performance, brought him 62l. 17s. 2d. for the first night. On the like conditions he

\* "If this account should startle the belief of those who hunt after employments as their only resource, Mr. Sheridan begs leave to remind them that it was not his case; he had it in his power to provide for himself much better than the Government could. He had set out in life upon certain principles, early imbibed from his great master Swift, which would not suffer him to think of such a course. Among these, one of the foremost was independence; without which there could be no liberty. By independence he means only a reliance upon a man's self, and his own talents and labours, for his support and advancement in life; for absolute independence belongs not to human beings." . . . "Though they who know not the value of such sort of independence; though they who know not how sweet the bread is which is earned by the sweat of one's own brow, may not have any faith in principles of this sort, yet surely they will give credit to a man upon their own favourite maxim, that of self-interest."

*Sheridan's Humble Appeal to the Public*, 8vo. 1758, p. 34.

he continued performing till March, in all twenty-four nights, besides benefits, and cleared upon the whole 863l. 1s. 10d.

The following is the list of plays, with Mr. Sheridan's dividend on each, respectively annexed.

*Theatre Royal, Crow-Street.*

1763, Nov.	11, Hamlet	-	62	17	2
	12, Ditto	-	50	9	11
	17, Richard the Third		24	6	4½
	19, Ditto	-	24	0	11½
	21, Venice Preserved		19	13	1½
	26, Jane Shore	-	31	16	5½
	28, Venice Preserved		7	17	7
Dec.	8, All for Love	-	11	12	10½
	10, Julius Cæsar	-	39	16	9
	12, Hamlet	-	94	10	4
	15, Othello	-	27	16	9½
1764, Jan.	9, Cato	-	29	3	4
	12, Hamlet	-	12	9	8
	14, Provoked Wife		0	14	10
	16, Richard the Third		12	15	7½
	21, Macbeth	-	6	2	11
	23, Comus	-	13	15	8
	28, Ditto	-	14	2	2
Feb.	4, As you like it		3	16	10½
	15, Othello	-	19	15	11
	11, All for Love	-	22	4	8
	13, King John	-	6	18	7½
	16, Alexander	-	18	5	0½
	20, Julius Cæsar	-	4	10	5
To Mr. Sheridan for 24 nights			£	559	14 1
Additional shares and benefits			-	303	7 9
Total			-	£	863 1 10

This,



This, in his way of proceeding, was more to the immediate advantage of his creditors than his own; for though, on the exprefs condition of the letter of licence, he was obliged to hand over one half merely, 431l. 10s. 11d. for their use, by this exertion of his talents alone, they received 668l. 3s. 0d. reserving to his separate disposal only 219l. 18s. 10d. The particulars of which appear in the following account, stated by Mr. Knowles, his brother-in-law and agent, which, with the original vouchers, on a former occasion deposited with my Father, are all now lying on my desk.

Total receipt of Mr. Sheridan's shares and bene-

fits, from Nov. 1763, to April 1764, inclusive £ 863 1 10

Cash paid to and for the use of Mr. Sheridan's  
creditors, viz.

Nov. 17, To J. Watfon, as per receipt	120	0	0	
Dec. 14, To Mat. Williamfon, do.	30	0	0	
19, To Richard Cullen, do.	11	7	6	
30, To H. Mitchell, Esq. do.	50	0	0	
To Tho. Adderly, Esq. do.	50	5	2	
1764. To sundry small debts	21	10	4	
Mar. 22, To W. Lefanu, Esq. trustee for the creditors, at fun- dries, as per his receipts	360	0	0	643 3 0
To Anth. Grayson, Esq's. attorney, advanced by Mr. Whyte	25	0	0	
	<hr/> £ 668 3 0			
Balance remaining in Mr. Sheridan's hands	£ 219 18 10			
Remitted to Mrs. Sheridan, per Mr. Ben- son's draft on Messrs. Portis, London, for the use of his family, 100l. English	107 17 6			
Balance reserved for his own use	<hr/> £ 112 1 4			
May the 4th, 1764,	JOHN KNOWLES.			

Out

Out of this slender pittance he had to pay his lodgings, support himself and his servant, and, on many occasions, to provide dresses and other articles proper for his appearance on the stage; the Theatrical wardrobe at that time being in a reduced state, and rather scantily suited. This at once refutes the idle notion of his extravagance, industriously propagated by his calumniators, and confidently asserted by many at this day. . . . Several who had demands against him, as before intimated, refused to sign the letter of licence, and as the artful and designing are never wanting in specious pretexts, he trusted to their honour; but they lay perdue watching their opportunity, and the event proved the wisdom of precaution on the part of Mr. Sheridan. While he continued playing, and was daily feeding his gaping creditors with gold, they suffered him to go on unmolested; but, notwithstanding these unequivocal proofs of his integrity, immediately on the expiration of his agreement with Barry, which closed with a benefit, his quondam Printer, who held a bond of his, and had but lately received a very handsome partial payment, entered judgment; and without further respite, ordered execution. My Father, fortunately, had the Sheriff's son then under his tuition, and through that channel got a hint of the business, which, having previously secured a passage in a vessel for England, he imparted to Mr. Sheridan, and hurried him directly on board. He landed safely at Parkgate, on the last day of April 1764, and by this means, the humane design of arresting him was frustrated.

According to the schedule, communicated to my Father by Mr. Knowles, together with other papers occasionally cited, his debts amounted to 5687l. 18s. 7d. exclusive of the mortgage on Quilca, and some others which he could not accurately ascertain, making in all upwards of 7000l. besides interest,

interest, contracted, not by extravagance and dissipation, but, with corroding anxiety and incessant fatigue, in the service of an ungrateful Public. The Irish Stage, before he, fatally for himself, engaged in the management, was a mere Bear-garden; by his unwearied exertions and abilities, it was raised to a degree of respectability and consequence, that would have done honour to the most enlightened and polished ages.\* After maintaining his fruitless struggles through a long series of years, at last encountering those baleful hydrae, Fashion and Caprice, his flattering hopes and all his shining prospects were defeated. In 1759, with a growing family, for whose welfare he was ever ardently solicitous; with an impaired constitution and bankrupt in his fortune, he retired from the scene; and, as the Historian honourably testifies, "the last day of his management was, in every respect, as laudable and praise-worthy as the first."

M

I have

\* "The Stage indeed had long been in a declining condition. Salaries were badly paid; business totally neglected, while irregularity and indecorum pervaded the whole. . . . The appearance and success of a new Actor produced sometime after the most remarkable change ever known in the Theatrical affairs of Ireland. . . . We must not however imagine that all this was accomplished in a day. It was the work of years.—Perfection is only to be attained by perseverance. . . . It may be naturally supposed that at first he had many difficulties to encounter. Bad habits, confirmed by time, were hard to be eradicated. Performers were unused to regularity, and the taste of the town was palled and vitiated. Non-payment of salaries he knew was the radical source of disorders; this, at the first setting off, and through the whole course of his management, he effectually obviated; and in other respects, his methods were so gentle, and at the same time so salutary, that they carried conviction with them. He always attended rehearsals, and settled the business of each scene with precision; not the most trifling incident preparatory to the performance was omitted. . . . His great judgment and perfect knowledge of his situation, amply qualified him for an instructor; and his regulations were so proper and conveyed in so pleasing a manner, that they were irresistible, and could not fail to be complied with. His highest ambition seemed to center in being considered the father of his company."

EXTRACT FROM HITCHCOCK.

I have been the more particular in tracing the foregoing transactions, and quoting the original vouchers now before me, as it was on the ground of these facts the Petition to Parliament was framed on Mr. Sheridan's behalf, by which he became entitled to the benefit of an Act of Insolvency, passed in the year 1766, while he was absent with his family at Blois in France. To do justice, it must be also confessed, that the sum of 360*l.* as above specified, paid into the hands of the Trustee for the Creditors, had not, when the application to Parliament was attempted, been distributed; owing to some difficulties in the business, which without Mr. Sheridan could not satisfactorily be adjusted. However, upon the whole, the Creditors had no great reason to complain; Mr. Lefanu did not suffer the money to lie dormant, nor, as a Banker he might, apply it to his own profit. He laid it out in Debentures, and liquidating the interest with the principal, when the matters in dispute were settled, honourably handed over to every man his share, which was more than could well be expected, and so far a reasonable compensation for the delay; but in regard to the parliamentary business, it was a circumstance, in the first stage, of untowardly aspect, and if not cautiously guarded against, might have defeated the attempt. This the Petitioner was aware of, and therefore, not to incur a greater risk, till the last moment concealed his design. That point being unexpectedly obtained, as our readers have before seen, Mr. Sheridan quitted France, where he had been deserted by all his wealthy and protesting friends,\* whom his warm prosperity had graced; and was once more happily restored to his native land. He arrived in Dublin the latter end of October 1766, and on Monday, February 2*d.* following, appeared at Crow-street in Hamlet,

\* See his Letter, dated Blois, August 1*st.* 1766, in a preceding page annexed to the Remarks on Boswell.



Hamlet, and continued performing there for fourteen nights, with his usual eclat, ending with Maskwell in the Double Dealer, for his own benefit. That day, after dinner, he consulted my Father, on the subject of calling a meeting of his Creditors, a point he had had sometime in contemplation. My Father warmly opposed it; conceiving it likely to involve him in fresh embarrassments, by exciting expectations which could not be gratified, and by implicated promises again endanger his personal safety, notwithstanding the measures recently adopted; upon the whole, as favouring more of ostentation, to which my Father was in all cases particularly averse, than any Good it could possibly produce. Perhaps his sincere wishes for the real honour of Mr. Sheridan, co-inciding with a disposition naturally zealous, made him over earnest in his remonstrances; some friends present not seeing, or in compliment to Mr. Sheridan, not choosing to see the affair in the light my Father took it, over-ruled the arguments he offered, and confirmed Mr. Sheridan in his purpose; however, he acknowledged the propriety of being guarded; and on Tuesday, March the 24th, 1767, the following advertisement appeared in Faulkner's Journal.

“ Mr. Sheridan desires to meet his Creditors at the Music-Hall, in Fishamble-street, on Thursday the 2d of April, at One o’Clock, in order to concert with them the most speedy and effectual method for disposing of his effects and making a dividend.”

The result of this meeting has been already set forth in the course of the Remarks, page 376. My Father attended, as Mr. Sheridan made it a point; but purposely delayed till the business of the congress was nearly settled, that he might not be called on for his opinion. Soon after his entrance, Mr. Sheridan, who was on the look-out, accosted him, ‘ Sam! I am glad to see you are come;’ . . . my Father bowed. . . . ‘ I perceive you are not satisfied with the measure.’ . . . ‘ Indeed,

Sir,

Sir, I am not." . . . Mr. Sheridan paused, and perhaps on reflection, when too late, was convinced he had taken a precipitate step. A coolness succeeded between the two friends; this was fomented by the officiousness of others, which occasioned a disunion of some continuance; but not the smallest appearance of animosity or recrimination occurred on either side; their spirit was above it; on the contrary, many acts of kindness and mutual good offices took place in the interval, which shewed a wish for the restoration of amity on both sides, if any one about them had been honest enough to promote it. My Father, still bearing in mind the obligations he owed to Mrs. Sheridan, who was the friend and parent of his youth, continued, without abatement, his attachment to her children; they, on a proper occasion, interposed; the parties were brought together, and their difference no more was remembered. It is to this difference between Mr. Sheridan and him, my Father alludes in his *Elegy on the Instability of Affection*, which stands the third in order in the New Edition of his Poems.

One Friend, one chosen Friend, I once possess'd,  
And did I in the hour of trial fail?  
Still be his Virtues, his Deserts confess'd;  
But o'er his lapses, Memory, drop the Veil.

WHYTE'S POEMS, p. 119.

The last office of kindness he had it in his power to render him, was at his lodgings in Frith-street, Soho. He supported him from his apartment down stairs, and helped him into the carriage that took him to Margate, where, the ninth day after, Death obliterated every thing—but his Virtues.

An observation or two more and we have done. . . . While Barry was struggling against the storm, which at last overwhelmed him, he gained, as already noted, Mr. Sheridan to his cause. The receipts of his first four houses are stated by

by Hitchcock,\* by which the reader will be farther enabled to judge of the truth of the paragraph in question; premising, on the same authority, that at this period the business in general was very bad, the rage being entirely for sing-song and Smock-alley. Love in a Village at Crow-street, five times repeated, never reached 30l. sometimes not 14l. other receipts have descended so low as 10l. Mr. Sheridan's first four nights as follows, viz.

1767, Feb. 2, Hamlet	-	-	171	19	0
5, Richard	-	-	113	13	0
9, Cato	-	-	141	16	0
13, Hamlet	-	-	148	9	5

Total receipt of Sheridan's four nights    £ 575 19 5

The

\* This writer, though remarkably exact in what came within the compass of his research, has been led into an error respecting Mr. Sheridan. He has adopted a notion, generally entertained, that Sheridan had the honour of being Preceptor to the Queen. Mr. Sheridan always contradicted it, and declared to the contrary. One day speaking on the subject, he said, "Our countrymen are fond of engrossing imaginary distinctions; it is a trait in the national character. Some years ago, the sign of Thomas Kouli Khan, Sophi of Persia, stared you in the face in every corner of Dublin, and all mouths were filled with the History and wonderful Exploits of that fortunate Usurper, who, incredible as it may seem, was discovered to be nothing more or less, than an Irish Renegade, honest Tom Callaghan of the county of Cork, who, according to the creed of the day, by his uncommon feats of valour and address, had raised himself to that dignity." . . . Angria, another distinguished Freebooter of the East, in like manner, was notoriously a native of the Island of Saints; nay, I have known some who have a hundred times played marbles with him; 'a damned keen dog he always was, and the foremost in every mischief.' On a recent occasion, in a very respectable company, it was very seriously asked, if Hyder Ali was not an Irishman. In a similar strain it was but lately asserted, that Dumourier, the French General's real name was Murray, formerly a private in the Irish Brigades. The O'Reillys, every child knows, are lineally descended from the Aurelii, a noble and imperial family of Ancient Rome.

The other ten, including two Benefits, were in order—The Double Dealer, Ditto second Night, Hamlet, The Double Dealer, Jane Shore, Double Dealer, Venice Preserved, King John, Julius Cæsar, and on Friday March 20th, The Double Dealer, for his last Benefit. The particular receipts are not preserved; but, as his novelty must have somewhat abated, we cannot presume with altogether equal success. Set down the entire upon an average at 130*l.* per night, by which with the addition of two Benefits, it may be admitted that he cleared 650*l.*; no part of which, either by compact or implication, his Creditors had any claim to. He had his own necessities to provide for, and a young family with none but himself to look up to; their most excellent mother was no more; and the state of his finances put it out of his power to indulge in works of supererogation.\*

The hearse his wife's respected corse that bore  
Lest him possess'd of scarce one louis-d'or.

WHYTE'S POEMS, p. 22.†

No calculation can be made to support the story from the succeeding occurrences. Mr. Barry, notwithstanding the extraordinary assistance he had derived from his union with Sheridan, soon after found himself obliged to resign to his then more fortunate antagonist; but mindful of his late obligations to the man, whom his rash opposition had formerly set adrift, in settling with Mossop, he provided in the body of the Article for Sheridan's being engaged, which was certainly with a friendly and good intention on the part of Barry. Sheridan took it otherwise, and was so offended that any man should presume to carve for him, that he would accede to no offers, and did not appear that winter. In the month of April following, Sheridan and Mossop accidentally meeting at  
an

\* See his Letter as before, dated Blois, August 1st, and also that of October 13th, 1766.

† Mirrour for Youth addic'd to the Theatro-Mania, line 552.



an entertainment given by a mutual friend, former bickerings were speedily forgotten, and, resentment giving place to convenience, the parties came to an agreement. Sheridan appeared a few days after in Hamlet, Richard and Cato successively; but Mossop declining a proposal to unite their powers and appear together, the connection was dissolved; and Sheridan, without taking a benefit, went off to England, to meet his young family on their return from France.

The amount of Mr. Sheridan's debts, as set forth in the paragraph under consideration, widely differs from the return given in by Mr. Knowles, who, being some time treasurer to the Theatre and Mr. Sheridan's agent, as well as married to his sister, must have thoroughly known the situation of his affairs. The schedule was made out for my Father, supposing he might have occasion for it, on his examination before the Committee of the House of Commons, touching the particulars; a case which required circumspection.

By this time our Readers must have perceived, from the very nature of the circumstances, the authority of the paragraph was too hastily admitted, and the flourish on liberality grounded on misrepresentation. If the Alderman had really acted in the manner described, it would have been no compliment to Sheridan; the compliment would have been to the Creditors, whose distributive shares would have been thereby proportionally augmented, as the Alderman's quota, so relinquished, must have merged in the general fund. Consequently, without detracting from the merits of Mr. Faulkner, and great merits he certainly possessed, on his part the eulogium was undeserved, and we risk nothing in asserting, that on the other it was equally undesired. Sheridan had a consciousness of integrity and rectitude within, that supported

supported him in every emergency through life; no praise was of any value in his estimation but what was honestly obtained. He realized in his conduct, to the fullest extent, the sentiment contained in those beautiful lines of Pope, which I have heard him, more than once, in his impressive manner, with pointed and peculiar energy recite:

All fame is foreign, but of true desert;  
Plays round the head, but comes not to the heart:  
One self-approving hour whole years outweighs  
Of stupid starers, and of loud huzzas;  
And more true joy Marcellus exil'd feels,  
Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels.

ESSAY ON MAN, Ep. iv. l. 254.

JUNE 12TH, 1798.



THE

## ORIGINAL LETTERS,

&c. &c.

THE subsequent LETTERS, selected from a long course of epistolary correspondence between Mr. and Mrs. SHERIDAN and my FATHER, establish the Facts, in contradiction to Mr. Boswell and others, set forth in our REMARKS on that Writer's voluminous MEMOIRS of the LIFE OF DR. JOHNSON, for which purpose the printing of them was chiefly intended. But, though few in number, they have recommendations which render them intrinsically valuable. They have the merit of being genuine, and written immediately to the occasion, without the least view to publication, which confessedly was not the case with most of the productions of our first-rate geniuses in this way. Their compositions, under the name of Familiar Letters, however admirable in other respects, are rather Epistolary Essays, like the papers of the Spectators, the result of premeditation and care; scrupulously corrected and polished for the press.\* Here we have examples of familiar writing as it should be, in its native simplicity and ease; every thought in its original

N

conception

\* We are told that a certain author of great learning and talents, used to employ a month in writing a letter of moderate length; and Pliny apologizes for the unusual length of a letter, by saying, he had not time to make it shorter, which is a proof that he was not accustomed to set down his thoughts *currente calamo*, or without reserve, to commit to his friends and posterity, the genuine effusions of his heart. Collections of Familiar Letters, are indeed numerous, by far the greatest part made in the life time and printed under the inspection of the authors. Mr. Addison has been known to suspend business of high importance, and stop the press to alter a comma or revise a word.

conception as it arose in the mind, spontaneously flowing from the pen. Truth is not sacrificed to ornament, nor sincerity disguised in studied periods. Several literary anecdotes contained in these Letters will probably be found interesting; but they possess in an eminent degree an excellence for which Familiar Letters are esteemed peculiarly valuable. They truly exhibit in pure unaffected language an undisguised picture of the heart, and serve to illustrate the character of the Writers; Writers too who have meritoriously approved themselves in the eye of the Public, and who must hereafter be distinguished in the History of Literature.

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MRS. SHERIDAN\* TO MR. WHYTE.

LONDON, NOV. 11th, 1758.

DEAR SAM,

I RECEIVED yours by the last Irish mail, and am much obliged to you for the notice you have given me in regard to the children. I should indeed have fixed them with you entirely as Boarders on my leaving Ireland; but as I expected to have returned long before this time, I thought that for so short a space, and especially as the exercise of walking in summer might be of use to them, that they could not be the worse for spending their evenings at home. However, as I am convinced of the justness of your reflections on the subject, I would by all means have them lodged in your house, and the sooner they are removed the better. Though I have an entire reliance as well on your care as that of Mrs. Whyte, yet I should not choose, at this distance from myself, to have the

\* This Lady is an exception to Mr. Boswell's general rule; she was a person Dr. Johnson and He highly valued, and always spoke well of. See *Memoirs of the Life of Johnson*, vol. i. pp. 352, 3, 4, *passim*. also Note on the preceding Remarks, p. 9.



the children deprived of the servant they have been so long used to. I know it would be a great hardship on the poor younger one in particular to lose nurse who has always hitherto been their attendant.\* They must necessarily have somebody

\* In a work printed by Faulder, London, this present year 1798, it is said, "Richard-Brinsley Sheridan, Esq. was born at Quilca near Dublin, in the year 1752. At the age of six years his Father, then compelled to quit his native country, brought him into England, and placed him at Harrow School, under the care of Dr. Sumner, who was at that time Head-Master, &c." The ingenious author has been greatly misled in almost every particular here advanced respecting Mr. Sheridan, as is evident, from the above Letters written by his Mother, and the circumstances of his birth related in a preceding page which, to save the trouble of turning back, take briefly as follows. . . . Mr. Sheridan, the Father, at the time of his son's birth, and some years before and after, lived at No. 12 in Dorset-street, Dublin; a new house built for him by a Mr. Orpin, now occupied by a Mr. Kindillon, directly opposite to the house in which Captain Solomon Whyte, Mrs. Sheridan's maternal uncle, then lived. The situation, though very inconvenient, being at a great distance from the Theatre, was fixed on at the special instance of her uncle, who was in a very declining state of health, and wished to have her near him; for she was his favourite niece, and they were mutually fond of each other. It pleased the Almighty to call him to his eternal home, March the 17th, 1757. In this house Richard-Brinsley Sheridan was born, at a season when his Father's occupation in town rendered his presence indispensably necessary, towards the latter end of October 1751; not in 1752, and consequently not at Quilca, which is not near Dublin. Young Sheridan was not brought to London by his Father in the year 1758; but was sent over late in the year 1759, and, not 'till after the Christmas vacation, in the year 1762, was placed at Harrow School; for which we have the authority of the Letters before us. If any fastidious critic should carp at the nicety of this statement, the circumstances have been taken up by several writers in succession, and all erroneously. It is nevertheless clear, that whatever is thought worthy of record, should be honestly and truly recorded; if, in such a case, so many mistakes could be committed, it may at least serve to shew our younger Readers, that when national vanity, the interest of individuals, or the prejudice of party, guides the author's pen, which is too much the case in both ancient and modern histories, though written by a Hume or a Gibbon, they are at best but ingenious Romances, and not to be relied on.

body to dress them, wash for them, and mend their cloaths; and if nurse can be made any otherwise useful in the family, I dare say she will be very willing to do her best. I would have her still attend them, and the terms for her can be as easily adjusted as for the children. If you want a bed or beds on the occasion, you may be supplied from the Blind-quay.

I can't at present inform you what stay we shall make here: Mr. Sheridan is now at Oxford, where he purposed to give a Course of Lectures; how long that will detain him I can't say; but I do not expect him to return this month. I sent your letter to him and waited for his answer, otherwise you should have heard from me sooner. When he writes to Dr. Leland or Mr. Tickell, he will take notice of what you say in regard to H. S. mean time if that branch of instruction which they offered you can be in any wise made worth your while, I think you would not do well to refuse it, as it may be a means of introducing you to something much better. I only say this as my own sentiments, for Mr. Sheridan did not give me his opinion on the subject.

As to Theatrical matters, I can say but little of them; but I doubt Mr. Sheridan, without a much better prospect than the present, will hardly be induced to take the burthen again upon his shoulders; for my own part I think we have had a sufficient proof how far Dublin is to be depended upon; I speak in general, for I am sure we have some very worthy friends there. Be that as it may, I can't as yet speak with certainty concerning our designation after Christmas. Mr. Sheridan's absence (for I have had him but for a few days with me these five weeks, and then very much engaged) leaves me ignorant of what our motions are to be at that time; but I have hope I shall then have it in my power personally to thank you for your attention to my poor little ones.

ones. You don't tell me whether they are going on with their French. Give my blessing to them, and tell them we shall meet ere 'tis long.

Pray make my compliments to Mrs. Whyte: I hope she has better health than when I saw her, and is by this time better reconciled to Ireland.

I am, Dear Sam,

Yours most sincerely,

FRANCES SHERIDAN.

P. S. My Brother and Sister are both very well, and wish to be affectionately remembered to you. Dr. Lucas, your old Friend, is perfectly recovered; he returned a few days ago from Harwich, where he had been on account of his health, and to attend Lord Charlemont, whom he has restored surprizingly. The Doctor was very particular in his enquiries about you, and requested I would assure you he has your welfare extremely at heart.

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MRS. SHERIDAN TO MR. WHYTE.

LONDON, MARCH 29TH, 1759.

DEAR SAM,

WHEN I look at the date of your last letter, I am ashamed that I have not answered it long before now: I will however endeavour to account for my omission in few words. When I received yours I was at Bath, where my drinking the waters, together with the general dissipation of the place, quite disqualified me either for writing or reading; to say the truth, I believe I never had either a pen or a book in my hand the whole time I was there; I should notwithstanding have written to you, but as I every day expected to have the business which detained Mr. Knowles concluded, so I intended

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by him, at his return to Dublin, to have writ to you at large on the subject of your letter. This made me defer writing from day to day, when at my return to London, the sickness and death of poor Miss Pennington (who was in the same house with me) so took up my attention, that it was a great while before I could think of any thing else. This was the true state of my situation, and I have nothing farther to offer in excuse for my silence.\*

The morning of the day in which our deceased friend took her illness, your name happening to be mentioned, she asked after you with great kindness, and told me many civilities which you had formerly shewn her. Yesterday I opened a writing-box and a little parcel she left me, in which I found some curiosities of value, and several interesting papers, which she had not before shewn me; among others, a very pretty Poem addressed to her by you it was enclosed in a letter of my sister Chamberlaine's. We used to set you down in the list of her admirers. She was in every sense indeed an estimable Being; a lively, sensible companion, and a sincere and discreet friend; naturally affectionate and obliging, her good offices were never wanting where she thought she could be of service. Books to be sure are a great source of entertainment in the gloom of retirement; but the mind cannot be always in a disposition for reading, and there are times and occasions which require more active consolation. Her agreeable conversation was the balm of my solitary hours, and her company in Mr. Sheridan's frequent absences, to which his  
avocations

\* Miss P. was once an admired star in the literary hemisphere. Whether or not there be any writings of hers extant, I cannot ascertain. The volume of well-written letters, containing an unfortunate Mother's Advice to her Absent Daughter, supposed to be addressed to this Lady, was a Posthumous Publication.



avocations indispensably oblige him, was to me a material acquisition; my dear Sam, I shall miss her very much; but this is selfish; don't condemn me for it.

Mr. Sheridan is now at Cambridge; but I expect his immediate return. I hope every thing goes on to your wishes. How are my dear little ones? do they often talk of me? keep me alive in their remembrance. I have all a mother's anxiety about them, and long to have them over with me; but I believe we shall not send for them till the latter end of June, and then I hope to see them. I mention this as a matter of business, as I know your number is limited, and, being apprized of our intentions in time, you may the better regulate your own measures and suit your convenience accordingly. If you will send me your account for the children, by nurse, when they leave you, I hope Mr. Sheridan will discharge it the first opportunity. But as to the Bond Debt I can say nothing; that is a more serious object, and I fear we must trespass on your friendship to wait sometime longer, till our affairs come about, and we can get a better hold of the world.

The main object of your last, requiring maturer deliberation and precision, I must defer to a more favourable opportunity. Let me hear from you soon, and in my answer I promise to be particular and explicit on the points you propose. This is a sad scrawl, very unfit to come before so excellent a penman; but I have neither time nor spirits to copy it fair: I hope you will be able to decypher it. Remember me to my brother and sister in Kevin's-street. I shall be very glad to hear of your prospering in your present and future undertakings; and am,

Dear Sam,

Your sincere Friend, &c. &c.

FRANCES SHERIDAN.

MRS. SHERIDAN TO MR. WHYTE.

WINDSOR, SEPTEMBER 12TH, 1759.

DEAR SAM,

MY Children are, thank God, arrived safe and well; they did not come down to me here till last Thursday; they staid a week in London, nurse being willing to wait for their baggage, which 'twas proper she should see safely lodged before she left town. I can't say they do their preceptor as much credit as George Cunningham does, for their progress has been rather small for eighteen months; but, mistake me not, I don't say this, as is too much the absurd custom of parents, by way of throwing a reflection on the teacher, of whose care and abilities I am perfectly satisfied; it is the interest of the master to do every thing to the best of his power for the advantage of his pupils; my children's backwardness I impute to themselves; owing to their natural slowness, their illness and long and frequent absences, not to any want of attention in you towards them.

Mr. Sheridan sends his best wishes to you, and is very much pleased to hear you are going on so well: he says, he is very sure you will make yourself conspicuous in your profession. I gave him your account, and he desires me to tell you, the instant it is in his power he will discharge as much of it as he can.

I believe you are not a stranger to the bad situation of our affairs in Ireland; he is here working his way through difficulties, and nothing but the prospect of having his labours crowned with success could support him under them; mean time as all our resources from your side are cut off, we are obliged to be oeconomists, till our affairs are settled upon a better footing, which we hope next winter will effect. I assure you, Sam, Mr. Sheridan laments the not having it in his

his power at this distance to assist you in the manner he once hoped to do.

I am glad to hear you have recovered your health and spirits, and with them I hope your peace of mind. In truth I believe I have inverted the order of things here, and have placed the effects before their cause. Be that as it may, I wish them to you all together, with an additional acquisition of reputation and fortune. There I think I have put matters to rights, and given the words their proper places; for according to the temporal order of things, in your way of life, money most assuredly waits on reputation.

Mr. Sheridan and I shall be glad to hear from you at your leisure.

I am, Dear Sam,

Yours sincerely, &c.

FRANCES SHERIDAN.

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MRS. SHERIDAN TO MR. WHYTE.

DECEMBER 2D, 1759.

DEAR SAM,

I OUGHT to make an apology for not answering yours of the 28th of August, if I had received it in any reasonable time within the date; but it did not come to my hands till the 7th of November. Mrs. Gregory, indeed, very politely excused herself for this delay, occasioned, as she obligingly expressed herself, in the letter in which she enclosed yours, by the desire she had to deliver your letter to me with her own hands, which she was prevented from doing by illness, till the bad weather came on and cut off all hopes of being able to get out of town; for I am still at Windsor.

I am extremely glad to hear from all hands that your school goes on so well: I have not the least doubt of your

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making a figure in your profession. Indeed it is but a small compliment to say this in the place where you now are; for I believe you have but few candidates for fame in your line; a moderate subsistence in the dog-trot way is all they expect or look for. Mr. Sheridan has gone a good way in the grammar; but as he only writes a little now and then, by snatches, as he is at present engaged in another course, which is to consist of eight lectures, and which chiefly engrosses his time and attention, he has not near completed the grammar; but, you may assure yourself, he will send it you, together with some other useful hints, as soon as it is perfect enough to be of use to you. He is very much obliged to you for your friendly behaviour, and it redoubles his concern at not having it yet in his power to acquit himself towards you as he thinks you deserve. But as you cannot be a stranger to the ruinous state of our affairs on your side the water, so you may imagine those events must, in some measure, even influence the progress of matters here; however, Mr. Sheridan is determined to persevere in what he thinks a right path, and I trust in God we shall succeed in the end.

The two boys are getting on in their learning, and I endeavour to assist them, particularly in the English branches, as well as I can. I should often be at a loss what to do with my time in this unfociable place, if I had not the children, with whom I find sufficient employment. We don't think of seeing London till after Christmas.

Mr. Sheridan sends his best wishes to you; the children their love.

I am, Dear Sam,

Yours most truly,

FRANCES SHERIDAN.

MRS.



MRS. SHERIDAN TO MR. WHYTE.

WINDSOR, MARCH 21ST, 1760.

DEAR SAM,

THOUGH your last letter was without date, I am sure it has been long enough written to make me ashamed of not having answered it before; if I were not conscious that it was really not in my power to do it sooner. At the time I received it Mr. Sheridan was in London, and he had not been at home long enough, to give me an opportunity to talk to him about the request you made, before I was obliged to go thither on particular business, which detained me ten days. Since my return to Windsor, which is now a fortnight, I have scarce been a day well. A disorder at my stomach, attended with violent head aches, pesters me perpetually, and disqualifies me almost for every thing; but particularly for writing.

Mr. Sheridan told me, on seeing your letter, that he would with great pleasure undertake the task you mentioned; but to do any thing that would be of material use to you, would take up a much longer time than you are aware of; he says, those very things you spoke of, would be at least a month's work to him, to do in such a manner as would be of any benefit to you; however, that would not deter him, if his time, the only thing he now can call his own, were not at this juncture extremely precious to him. This is not occasioned through want of leisure, as here he can have but few avocations; but his health is so precarious, having lately been violently attacked with his old disorder, that he is obliged to lay hold of every interval of ease, to pursue a very arduous task which he has set about. His Lectures are finished; but were not done time enough to give them in London, as he intended. He is now engaged in a very extensive plan, in which the English Language will be set in a  
light,

light, that few think it capable of receiving. I could heartily wish, that you were within reach, that he might communicate his labours to you. You, who have so much considered it yourself, must receive a particular pleasure from what he could shew you on the subject, as he often speaks of your indefatigable enquiries, and commendable curiosity on this occasion. He has assured me that you shall be the first to whom he will communicate what he has written, as soon as it is in a form fit for an advantageous perusal; how soon this will be I can't pretend to say; I can only answer for my not failing to remind him of you, though I am sure his own inclinations would lead him to serve you more materially than in this point were it in his power. The time I hope will come; for we have had a sufficient share of disappointments; patience, courage and industry, however, will surmount every thing.

In a former Letter I wrote to you, I mentioned two things you quite forgot in your answer. The one was, the Letter I sent to Mrs. Katherns, which I should have been glad to know if she received; the other was the enquiries after the poor little family of Mr. Fish;\* the account I have since had of his death has been a melancholy answer to those.

You told me you would let me know *under seal of secrecy*, why a certain person interfered so warmly about Mrs. ——. I should be glad you would explain this. I assure you your information shall be a secret, except to Mr. Sheridan, to whom I believe you would impart it as soon as to me. A secret delivered to me, *viva voce*, might be lodged safely within my own breast; but those communicated by Letter hazard a participation, as I have no correspondence that I don't shew. I only mention this, that, in case you would wish nobody to know

\* The Rev. Mr. John Fish, M. A. Chaplain to the Blue-coat Hospital, married to her elder sister, Ann, deceased; there were but the two Sisters.

know of what you have to say but myself, you need not write it.

Mr. Sheridan and the children all desire to be cordially remembered to you.

I am, Dear Sam,

Yours sincerely,

FRANCES SHERIDAN.

MRS. SHERIDAN TO MR. WHYTE.

LONDON, FEBRUARY 26TH, 1761.

DEAR SAM,

CONSIDERING I am not remarkable for my expedition in answering letters, I think I need not make any apology for not acknowledging the receipt of yours of December 20th, sooner.

I shall just briefly dispatch the contents of that, having matters of more consequence to speak to.

I need not tell you how sincerely glad both Mr. Sheridan and I are at every success and every fresh mark of approbation you meet with; I think Nature cut you out for the profession, and I can have no doubt but your own industry and application have made large improvements on her handy-work. I am gratified to hear that you expect to have the children of families of so much respectability and consequence as those you mention; this must needs give an éclat to your school, if you yourself was less qualified than I am sure you are for the important task of education.

Perhaps you were 'more nice than wise' in burning your English Grammars; it shews however a diffidence very commendable at your years. Mr. Sheridan will be extremely glad to see what you intend by the advice of your friends to publish,

publish, when an opportunity offers. I hope you will send it to him, and he flatters himself that *advice* will not be the only thing that he will soon have it in his power to send you.

He stands here in high reputation, with a prospect of being every day more and more esteemed. The late King's death, which shut up the Theatres for a time, together with the necessity the Managers were under of bringing on the stage five new pieces (Farces and Comedies) has prevented him appearing so often as it was expected; this, however, tho' it has a little curtailed his profit, has been no hindrance to his reputation, which stands very high in all the parts he has been seen in. He is now preparing for another course of Practical Lectures, which he intends to read and then to publish. I could wish distance did not render communication so inconvenient, as I am sure you might be benefited by some lights from him.

He has as yet been immersed in too great a variety of business (not to mention private vexations) to be able to put the finishing hand to what I purposed sending to you.

As for myself you will see how my solitary hours were employed last winter at Windsor, if you have time enough to bestow the reading on the Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph, which will soon be published by G. Faulkner.

I had this day an interview with Mrs. Gardiner, requested by her last night by an exceedingly urgent note. The conversation was long and interesting, in which, though I could perceive strong prejudices and great partiality in her own favour, she threw much blame on you. I cannot now enter into particulars; but hereafter, when I am less exposed to interruptions, will give you my best opinion and advice upon the subject. I own her visit was not attended with the consequences which I looked for. What have you done with your two Tragedies? I expected Mrs. Gardiner would have brought



brought them with her, and apprized Mr. Sheridan on the subject. He says, he will answer for having one of them performed, and will not only undertake the part you wrote for him; but will take care the whole shall be advantageously cast and prepared for representation. A friend of yours has already sketched out an Epilogue, and I have been promised a Prologue by another; so far matters are in train as to that; but the other, Mr. Sheridan fears, from the account I gave him, will not do for the stage: he thinks the subject unfit for representation, and too like the story of Oedipus.\*

I must stop here or lose the opportunity of sending you this by the present conveyance. I am, in the Mercantile Style, for Self and Company,

Dear Sam,

Sincerely yours,

FRANCES SHERIDAN.

MRS.

\* This kind and flattering offer came too late. Both the Tragedies, sharing the same fate with the Grammars, having been committed to the flames. . . . The first of them was the story of Abradatas and Panthea, taken from the 5th Book of Xenophon's *Cyropædia*. The other was taken from an anonymous pamphlet printed by Geo. Faulkner, 1751, entitled "ELEONORA, OR A Tragical and True Case of Incest," reported by the author, who declares he intimately knew and was in confidence with the parties, to have happened in the North of Scotland, Anno 1685. It is precisely the same story, with some local variations, on which Mr. Walpole founded his Tragedy of the *Mysterious Mother*. The Right Hon. Author of that piece, though he lays the scene at Narbonne in France, gives us to understand, on the authority alledged of Archbishop Tillotson, that it was a matter of fact well known in England, and several writers are mentioned, who before him had hit upon the subject; but there is no notice taken of a book prior to any of them, where we have since discovered it, and there it is stated that the crime was perpetrated on the Continent. Bishop Taylor, in his *Ductor Dubitantium*, 1659, book i. chap. iii. sect. 3d, cites this identical story, from Comitulus, as of a strange and rare case happening at Venice, proposed for the determination of a congregation of learned and prudent persons; we must suppose of Divines. Here are three Authors, whose credentials it might be rash to call

MRS. SHERIDAN TO MR. WHYTE.

LONDON, FEBRUARY 25TH, 1762.

DEAR SAM,

IT is so long since you and I have corresponded that I really do not recollect whether you are a letter in my debt or I in yours; for my own credit's sake I wish it may be the former; but be it as it may I will not omit the opportunity of Mr. Rainsford's return, to send you Mr. Sheridan's Dissertation, which includes part of his plan. 'Tis addressed, as you see, to a great man; when you read it you will not be at a loss to discover, that the person addressed is our present first Minister. It has been as well received by him as we could possibly wish, and even beyond the expectation of our friends. He expressed himself highly pleased with the design, and sent Mr. Sheridan word it should receive all countenance and encouragement. Lord Bute is a man of his word, and every body knows his great influence, so that the affair now seems likely to become of great importance. The Course of Lectures which Mr. Sheridan is now reading in the city is attended in a manner that shews the people more warm and earnest on the subject than can well be conceived; his auditory seldom consisting of less than five hundred people, and this is the utmost the hall will contain; many have been disappointed for want of room, and he is strenuously solicited to repeat the Course again immediately in the same place.

call in question; one says Scotland; another, England; a third Venice, and, a fourth, not yet quoted, pleads an alibi, and fixes, beyond doubt, the real scene of action at Prague, in Bohemia: O, the faith of historians! credit the enormous tale who will, I'd as soon believe that Romulus and Remus were nursed by a wolfe. The plain inference to be drawn is, for the honour of human nature, no such thing ever happened; but that the whole is merely a fiction of casuists, as a basis to support an opinion.

place.\* This I believe he will comply with, though he is to give another Course next month at Spring-Gardens. Last Monday evening Charles for the first time exhibited himself as a little orator. He read Eve's Speech to Adam from Milton, beginning "O thou! for whom, and from whom I was form'd," &c. as his Father had taken a deal of pains with him, and he has the advantage of a fine ear and a fine voice, he acquitted himself in such a manner as astonished every body. . . . He purposes in his next Course to shew him in all the variety of style that is used in English composition, and hopes in a very little time to make him complete in his own art. Dick has been at Harrow School since Christmas;† as he probably may fall into a bustling life, we have a mind to accustom him early to shift for himself; Charles's domestic and sedentary turn is best suited to a home education \* \* \* \* this is the present system of your little old acquaintance.

I shall be glad of your opinion on the Dissertation, as also to know what progress you yourself have made in this particular branch in your school, which I am very glad to hear by Mr. Rainsford is in great reputation. I am obliged to break off, as I have been interrupted a dozen times since I sat down to write. Indeed I am so distressed for want of a room to myself, that it discourages me from attempting any  
P thing,

\* Mr. Sheridan admitted in print that to three Courses he had upwards of sixteen hundred subscribers at a guinea each, besides occasional auditors, and the benefit arising to him afterwards from the publication of the Lectures, (price half-a-guinea in boards) which had a rapid sale, so that his emolument on the whole must have been considerable indeed.

† This account (February 25th, 1762) little accredits the information of those who place Richard-Brinsley Sheridan at Harrow-School in the year 1758, as noticed in the preceding pages.

thing, though I have this winter made a shift to scribble something that you shall hear of another time.

Adieu, Dear Sam,

I am yours sincerely,

FRANCES SHERIDAN.

P. S. My sister Chamberlaine desires me to inform you (you may be assured I did not hint the subject) that she had paid Mrs. . . . . some money that you had *left in her hands for that use*, which she expects you'll acquit her of. I leave my brother Dick to answer for himself.

Mrs. SHERIDAN to Mr. WHYTE.

LONDON, MARCH 30TH, 1762.

DEAR SAM,

I HOPE you have long before this received my letter, together with the packet which I sent you by the hands of Mr. Rainsford, and that I have made my peace with you on account of my long silence.

I should have answered yours of the 16th past, immediately, but that I waited in hopes of being able to give you some satisfactory account of your friend Mr. Armstrong, and am very glad to inform you, that I happened to have interest enough with a very worthy gentleman to get him a small employment, which he has thought worth his acceptance. Upon my first application to this gentleman (which was directly on the receipt of your letter) he told me he had nothing then in his power; but that I might depend on him when any thing offered. I then got my Brother to write to Mr. Adair, who returned the same answer, and I was afraid the young man might have continued here a long time without succeeding, when my friend, Commissioner Tom, came himself to tell me he had a place worth sixty pounds a year,



year, and apartments, &c. with it. I understood from him that he had a mind to go abroad; but as nothing eligible was to be procured in that way, I thought that this might be better than nothing. I writ to him, and desired him to wait on Commissioner Tom. He did so, and Mr. Tom has since informed me that he accepted of the place, and purposed going down to Portsmouth, where he is stationed; but I have not yet seen him, though it is now above a week since this affair was settled, which I am the more surpris'd at, as I requested he would call on me. I suppose he will call on me before he leaves town (if he be not gone;) but as this looks a little remiss, I have been the more particular in my account to you, lest he should have neglected writing to you.

Mr. Sheridan is much obliged to you for the great delicacy with which you make your application, in giving it the air rather of requesting a favour than making a just demand. Few people, Sam, can *think*, much less act, generously, or even genteelly. He will not fail to send you the sum mentioned in about a month's time at farthest. Indeed he could have wished you had been less modest on this occasion, and put in your claim with the rest of the creditors, who, you I believe must know, have already received each a dividend by the hands of Mr. Sheen. I hope another year or so will set him clear, and that he will then be able to enjoy the fruits of his labour, which hitherto has not been the case. He has had but very indifferent health all the winter; but is now, thank God, much better. He purposed going through a new Course of Lectures in the middle of April, and will give them alternately in the city, and at the court end of the town. You know the inhabitants of those two quarters are as distinct as if they were in two different countries.

I should be glad to know how you like the Dissertation and the Address to Lord Bute. I believe I told you in my last  
that

that he had received it very well, and promised the plan all countenance and encouragement.

Mr. Sheridan and the little ones desire to be remembered cordially to you. Mrs. Chamberlaine has been extremely ill and does not yet leave her room ; my brother is very well.

I am, Dear Sam,

Most sincerely yours, &c.

FRANCES SHERIDAN.

P. S. Not finding myself worth a frank when I came to fold up this letter, I postponed sending it till this day, April 1st. . . . . No news of Mr. Armstrong !

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MRS. SHERIDAN TO MR. WHYTE.

LONDON, MAY 31ST, 1759.

DEAR SAM,

THOUGH my last Letter to you is unanswered, I think myself obliged to write to you again, and should indeed have done it much sooner, if a tedious indisposition had not confined me to my room, (and part of the time to my bed) for three weeks: It was the epidemical disorder which, we hear, was all over Europe, and in which I shared very severely.

When I last wrote to you, I, in Mr. Sheridan's name, promised to answer the request, which you in so kind and modest a manner, but just proposed; on which account it redoubles both Mr. Sheridan's and my uneasiness that we cannot keep our word. I shall however reap this one advantage from the concern I have felt on this occasion, that it will teach me for the future never to make a promise, the power of fulfilling which depends upon contingencies. When I writ last, which was, I think, in March, Mr. Sheridan then  
proposed

proposed giving another Course of Lectures in April in London, after which he had a prospect (which then appeared a certainty) of receiving considerable advantages from a journey to Scotland, which was to have taken place before this time. But in both these designs he has been disappointed. In regard to the first, having left some printing work to be done, which was necessary previous to the new Course of Lectures to be delivered here, he went out of town for a fortnight, all which time was lost; for on his return he found nothing done of the preparatory business; this having put him back a good deal, by the time he had got in readiness, the illness which I have mentioned seized on him, and though his lasted but a few days, yet the complaint so universally prevailed all over London, that for a time public entertainments were but little attended, and the fine weather advancing reduced the number of his auditors so much, many going out of town who would have been of the number, that he found it would by no means answer his purpose to read a third Course; so that all hopes of advantage from that were cut off at once. In regard to his Scotch journey, the many reasons which deterred him from that, would be too long to tell you; but he found they had been so dilatory in his absence, and so much departed from the original plan laid down by him, through the ignorance or officiousness of some who had got some share of the conduct of it, that he was advised by his principal friends there, not to be concerned with them, till they had put matters upon a better footing; and as he found it would be difficult and troublesome to effect his chief design (that of the Academy) this year, he thought a visit, merely for his own advantage, would not at this juncture appear well to them, and therefore he dropt all thoughts of it. I believe I need not tell you, that these two disappointments have a good deal distressed us; especially as he was to make  
a payment

a payment to his creditors in Dublin this very month. However uneasy it may make a man not to have it in his power to discharge creditors from whom he has no reason to expect indulgences, I assure you it makes me infinitely more unhappy to disappoint one whose good natured forbearance I have already experienced, and from whose friendship I have no disagreeable consequences to apprehend. Mr. Sheridan is however still not without hopes of being able in less than a month, to discharge some part of his load, and if he is not again disappointed, you shall not.

Mr. Sheridan's last Course of Lectures are now printing; as soon as they are ready he will send you over the book. We shall soon go some where out of the noise and dust of London, and Mr. Sheridan will employ himself this summer in writing his English Dictionary, which we have reason to hope will be a successful work.

I am, Dear Sam,

Yours most sincerely,

FRANCES SHERIDAN.

The children send their love to you.

MRS. SHERIDAN TO MR. WHYTE.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 29TH, 1762.

DEAR SAM,

IT was not in *revenge* that I did not answer yours of the 2d of October sooner. The truth is, since my return to town from Windsor, I have been much employed though often interrupted by intervals of bad health, which of late have frequently returned on me. I have however mustered up spirits enough to write . . . what do you think? Why, a Comedy! which is now in rehearsal at Drury-lane. I had formed my plan, and nearly finished the scenes last summer at Windsor (the place of my inspiration,) when I came to town,  
and



and shewed it to a few people ; what was said to me on the occasion encouraged me to take some pains in the finishing of it. Mr. Garrick was pressing to see it, and accordingly I read it to him myself. - What his opinion of it is, you may judge by his immediately requesting it to be put into his hands, and undertaking to play the *second* character, a comic, and very original one.\* Mr. Sheridan is to play the first, one of a graver cast, and a great deal of variety, and which requires a considerable actor to perform. My first theatrical essay has so far met with an almost unprecedented success; most of us, poor authors, find a difficulty in getting our pieces on the stage, and perhaps are obliged to dangle after Managers a season or two: I on the contrary was solicited to give mine as soon as it was seen. It is to come out early in January (the best part of the winter) and as it is admirably well cast, I have tolerable expectations of its succeeding.

Mr. Sheridan has written to Mr. Sheen, to give you one of his books which he will soon receive from hence. He is now, as I mentioned to you formerly, busied in the English Dictionary, which he is encouraged to pursue with the more alacrity, as his Majesty has vouchsafed him such a mark of Royal Favour. I suppose you must have heard, that he has granted him a pension of two hundred pounds a year, merely as an encouragement to his undertaking, and this without solicitation, which makes it the more valuable.†

He

\* See the Note annexed at the end of this Letter.

† Mr. Boswell, always ready to detract from Mr. Sheridan, and edge in a compliment to Johnson at another's expence, contrives to give an invidious twist to this mark of Royal Favour, stating, as noticed in our Remarks, that, "Mr. Sheridan's Pension was granted to him as a sufferer in the cause of Government," which this account of Mrs. Sheridan's, confirmed by the printed address to Lord Bute, clearly refutes, and shews Mr. Boswell was greatly misinformed, or wilfully deviates from the truth.

He intends giving a new Course of Lectures in March; the preparing of which, together with his getting ready in the Comedy, (his part being a very long one) will fully take up his time the remainder of the winter; whatever hours he can make beside must be employed in the Dictionary, as he does not purpose playing any other characters; nor would he have appeared at all this season, if my play could have been got up well without him, as he has been far from being well these two months past.

I know not whether Mr. Armstrong ever gave you any account of himself. The circumstance which I mentioned to you he afterwards cleared up, in a way which was not at that time satisfactory either to me or himself; however it is now over; a *failure* on his side occasioned his losing the little place which was ready for his acceptance; but this, as he begged of me not to mention, I charge you never to take notice of it, to any of his friends: Perhaps he has done better; for on his missing that, I got him so well recommended, that he was sent with the army to Portugal in a very good station, where I suppose he now is.

Your former little pupils are all very well, and send their love to you. Mr. Sheridan joins me in wishing you all success.

I am, Dear Sam,

Yours sincerely,

FRANCES SHERIDAN.

Mrs.

\* *Mr. Garrick was pressing to see it, &c.* See page preceding. . . . This behaviour of Garrick does him infinite honour; but the particular compliment to Mrs. Sheridan, as a writer, in her modest way of relating it, does not appear in its full force; which is greatly heightened by the consideration, that at the time Sheridan and he were upon very unfriendly terms. Davies on the subject says . . . "Notwithstanding it was become impossible to adjust differences between the Manager and Mr. Sheridan, in such a manner as to bring them on the same Stage, and upon the usual terms of acting, yet when Mrs. Sheridan's Comedy of the  
Discovery

MRS. SHERIDAN TO MR. WHYTE.

LONDON, MAY 12TH, 1764.

DEAR SAM,

I RECEIVED yours by the hands of Mr. Sheridan, whose sudden arrival not a little surpris'd me. Though I cannot plead guilty to the charge of not answering your letters; yet I do not really well know how to defend myself; for I cannot take upon me to assert, merely from memory, that I answered *all* your letters; but can venture to say, from the general tenour of my conduct, that I am sure it is impossible, that I could have received so many from you without answering them. *One* letter I know I was in your debt when Mr. Sheridan went over, which I commissioned him to answer personally, and if, as you say, you had written three before that, I either did not get them, or you did not get my answers. But to have done with justifications (which between friends are always best when shortest) I am extremely glad to hear you are established so advantageously, with so good a character, which I have no doubt you deserve, and with such desirable prospects

Q

Discovery was offered to Mr. Garrick, he accepted it, and consented that Mr. Sheridan should play the principal part in the play, and receive for his labour the advantage of two nights' profits, besides those for the Author. . . . He was indeed so warm in behalf of the Discovery, that he assured a Publisher, who afterwards bought a share in it, that it was one of the best Comedies he ever read, and that he could not do better than to lay out his money in so valuable a purchase." . . . *Memoirs of Garrick* as before, vol. i. p. 310.

Observe, my young Readers! what a difference in conclusions a few words may create. Here are two writers, without the smallest intention to mislead, perfectly agreed in the principal point, yet by a small variation of phrase, throwing a quite different light on the accessories. Mr. Davies, in the usual routine of his profession, gives Mr. Garrick the credit of accepting the Comedy, purely as a matter of favour. Mrs. Sheridan, on the contrary, more naturally from her feelings on the occasion, without assuming to herself any extraordinary airs of merit, in pure simplicity of heart, ascribes the compliment to his judgment, and the probable expectations of success. And that this is the proper and true construction to be put upon it, Mr. Garrick's subsequent conversation with the publisher abundantly evinces.

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pects before you. Mr. Sheridan expresses himself much obliged to you for your friendship ; for which you have my warmest acknowledgements.

And now, Sam, not by way of compensation, for that is not in my power to make you ; but as a sort of little regale in your own way, for want of other matter, I will send you the result of a morning's meditation.

ODE TO PATIENCE.

Unaw'd by threats, unmov'd by force,  
My steady Soul pursues her course,  
Collected, calm, resign'd ;  
Say, you who search with curious eyes  
The source whence human actions rise,  
Say, whence this turn of mind ?  
'Tis Patience. . . . Lenient Goddess, hail !  
Oh ! let thy votary's vows prevail,  
Thy threaten'd flight to stay ;  
Long hast thou been a welcome guest,  
Long reign'd an inmate in this breast,  
And rul'd with gentle sway.  
Thro' all the various turns of fate,  
Ordain'd me in each several state,  
My wayward lot has known ;  
What taught me silently to bear,  
To curb the sigh, to check the tear,  
When sorrow weigh'd me down ?  
'Twas Patience. . . . Temperate Goddess, stay !  
For still thy dictates I obey,  
Nor yield to Passion's Power ;  
Tho' by injurious foes borne down,  
My fame, my toil, my hopes o'erthrown,  
In one ill-fated hour.

When



When robb'd of what I held most dear,  
My hands adorn'd the mournful bier  
Of her I lov'd so well;  
What, when mute sorrow chain'd my tongue,  
As o'er the fable hearse I hung,  
Forbade the tide to swell?

'Twas Patience! . . . Goddesses ever calm!  
Oh! pour into my breast thy balm,  
That antidote to pain;  
Which flowing from thy nectar'd urn,  
By chymistry divine can turn  
Our losses into gain.

When sick and languishing in bed,  
Sleep from my restless couch had fled,  
(Sleep, which even pain beguiles,)   
What taught me calmly to sustain  
A feverish being rack'd with pain,  
And dress'd my looks in smiles?

'Twas Patience! . . . Heaven-descended Maid!  
Implor'd, flew swiftly to my aid,  
And lent her fostering breast;  
Watch'd my sad hours with parent care,  
Repell'd the approaches of despair,  
And sooth'd my soul to rest.

Say, when dis sever'd from his side,  
My friend, protector, and my guide,  
When my prophetic soul,  
Anticipating all the storm,  
Saw danger in its direst form,  
What could my fears controul?

'Twas

'Twas Patience! . . . Gentle Goddess, hear!  
 Be ever to thy suppliant near,  
 Nor let one murmur rise;  
 Since still some mighty joys are given,  
 Dear to her soul, the gifts of Heaven,  
 The sweet domestic ties.

I will not now take up your time or my own with any affected uneasiness about my Verses, by way of deprecating your censure, &c. I know you will like them for the sake of the Author: and in your hands I have nothing to fear from the severity of the Critic.

Mr. Sheridan and the children join in being affectionately remembered to you.

I am, Dear Sam,

Sincerely yours, &c.

FRANCES SHERIDAN.

This Ode to Patience is not a common-place rhapsody of sombrous declamation which youthful poets dream, and, those especially of the female class, are wont to think so charming. In every stanza, almost in every line, the amiable writer has reference to some peculiar distress, to which, at one time or other, her hard condition had exposed her. She has not given the incidents as they occurred, in an exact chronological series; but rather consulted poetical effect, more consonant to her own feelings, and the order of nature. In the last stanza but one, the subject of which claims precedence in point of time, she alludes to the fatal riot that took place at the Theatre, on the second representation of Mahomet, the 2d of March, 1754, which eventually proved the ruin of her husband, and in a moment totally eclipsed the flattering prospects of better days. That evening she was peaceably sitting at home, in conversation with a friend, the person to whom these Letters are addressed; when a Man, horror in his countenance, breathless and pale, without ceremony

mony rushed into the parlour. . . . Oh, Madam ! Smock-alley is in flames ! . . . In flames ? ! . . . Yes, all in a blaze, Madam. . . . She rose, and looking wistfully at the door, advanced a step or two towards it ; but a little recovering herself, in a half-smothered, under voice, she scarcely articulated, Where is your Master ? . . . At the house ; all is uproar and distraction, and I just got away with my life. . . . She had a heart susceptible and feelingly alive to the calamities of her fellow-creatures.

The alarm was sudden ; it was too much :  
 Yet not a tear dropt ; not a sigh escaped her,  
 Speechless awhile and motionless she stood,  
 In fearful streights bewilder'd and absorpt ;  
 A subject for the pencil of Raphael !  
 What then, so tried, was her resource ? . . 'twas Patience,  
 With eyes uprais'd, she, for the worst prepar'd,  
 With pious resignation sits her down,  
 And her smooth cheek upon her white arm leaning,  
 Penfive and calm, awaits the dread event.

But she remained not long in this disconsolate posture ; the carriage stopped at the door, and Mr. Sheridan came in, unhurt. The servant, early in the disturbance, anticipating the consequence, in a panic ran home and was premature in his account ; but she overlooked his rash precipitance, and never revealed it to his Master.

Mrs. Sheridan's second Comedy, the Dupe, was brought out at Drury-lane, about the beginning of January, 1764, while Mr. Sheridan was absent in Dublin. One night at his lodgings in Crow-street, just after supper a packet was delivered to him, which on opening proved to be a copy of the Dupe, which Mrs. Sheridan, in a letter accompanying it, informed him had failed ; greatly owing, as it was thought, to some Theatrical cabals, fomented by a popular actress, who conceived her consequence had been some how injured

by

by the Sheridans. To these circumstances the fair Author manifestly alludes in the fourth stanza of her Ode to Patience, and it is more than probable, that on this very occasion it was written. However, Mr. Sheridan, though that evening he had exerted himself with great eclat in a very laborious part, I think Richard, consulting the inclinations of two or three friends present, read to them the whole Comedy through; and afterwards gratified them with the contents of another letter, which at the same time he received along with it enclosed. I cannot take upon me to say, that I retain it precisely verbatim, having never seen it but once; but I can positively affirm, it was (very nearly in the words) to the following effect:

TO MRS. SHERIDAN,

MADAM,

BELIEVE me, I am truly concerned that your Comedy has met with such severe, and, without flattery I must add, such undeserved treatment on the stage. Neither am I singular in this opinion; the rapid sale of it is an undeniable proof of its merit, which the Public have not been blind to in the closet. The demand for your piece at my shop, has been so uncommonly great, that, exclusive of the copy-money, it has enabled me to present you with the enclosed, of which I entreat your acceptance, as a small testimony of that gratitude and respect, with which I have the honour to subscribe myself,

Madam,

Your most obliged

And obedient humble servant,

ANDREW MILLAR.

To the honour of a London bookseller, the enclosed was A BANK-BILL FOR ONE HUNDRED POUNDS sterling; the same sum which by agreement she had before received from him for the copy-right.

This speaks for itself and needs no comment.

MR.



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MR. SHERIDAN TO MR. WHYTE.

CHESTER, APRIL 30TH, 1764.

MY DEAR SAM,

I HAVE just time to inform you, that I landed safe to-day at three, after a good passage with abominable accommodation on board. I am setting out directly for London, and hope to reach it by Wednesday evening. Pray communicate this intelligence to Knowles, and let him know, he shall hear from me immediately after my arrival. I beg you will remember me in the kindest manner to Mr. and Mrs. Guinefs, and let them know I shall ever retain the most grateful sense of their civilities to me. You shall hear from me soon again.

I am, Dear Sam,

Very sincerely,

And affectionately yours,

THOMAS SHERIDAN.

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MR. SHERIDAN TO MR. WHYTE.

RICHMOND, MAY 12TH, 1764.

MY DEAR SAM,

I KNOW it will give you pleasure to hear, that my friends have settled matters for me in such a way, that I shall be no longer in apprehensions with regard to what my humane creditors may do. I am at present on a visit, for a few days, to a particular friend at Richmond, while Mrs. Sheridan is preparing for our expedition to Scotland; on which we shall set out in eight or ten days; so that you need not answer this, or write, till I shall have given you notice of my arrival there. One of my friends, a powerful one, has cut out an employment for me, which will place me in a conspicuous point of view, beyond the reach of my enemies; and I have reason to believe, that the thing will be done  
early

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early next Winter. Pray tell Knowles that I should have writ to him, by this post, but that I forgot to bring some franks down with me; I am preparing some necessary papers which I will send to him on my return to town. The kind concern you took in my affairs whilst I was in Dublin, has endeared you much to me; and I hope the time is not far off, when I shall be able to make you suitable returns. Pray let me be remembered in the kindest manner to our good friends in Crow-street, and believe me to be ever

Sincerely, and

Affectionately yours, &c.

THOMAS SHERIDAN.

MR. SHERIDAN TO MR. WHYTE.

EDINBURGH, AUGUST 8TH, 1764.

DEAR SAM,

I HAVE been so long silent, for no other reason, but that I never could find an hour in which I could sit down to write with the least satisfaction. I have past a most disagreeable time for these last three months, having never been one day free from my old complaint, and frequently confined with colds. This, together with some other circumstances, has baffled my design in coming hither. The last has been a most unfortunate year; but I may hope, from the old proverb, that things will mend soon. I shall in a few days set out for London; but have two or three visits to pay by the way; so that I do not expect to reach it in less than a fortnight or three weeks. My plan of operations is settled, and I am perfectly easy in my mind, as I think I shall be guarded against all events from without, and have little to fear but from ill health. The completion of my Grammar and Dictionary must now employ all my time, as the foundation of my future fortune;

fortune; and I doubt not but a large superstructure may be raised on it. When that is completed, my friends have something in view for me, which will make me easy during my life; and probably enable me to provide well for my family. I received your former, with a few lines from Mrs. Guinefs. Pray make my excuses to her, for not having writ any thing in return; for I esteem her much, and shall always retain a grateful sense of the civilities I met with both from her and Mr. Guinefs. But indeed I had not spirits to write, nor should I have sat down to the task now, but to prevent your imputing my silence to a wrong cause. Be assured, my dear Sam, I set a great value on your friendship, as I know it to be sincere; a rare thing in this world!

Nor construe any farther my neglects

Than that poor Brutus, with himself at war,

Forgets the shews of love to other men.

But I hope white hours are approaching, and then you shall hear often from me. I shall be always eager to communicate any good news to my friends, that they may participate of my satisfaction: but I have no delight in their sympathizing with me in my distress. With respect to sharing my good fortune, I could be a very prodigal; but I am a perfect miser in regard to the ill, and would keep it all to myself.

If Mr. Richard Chamberlaine be still in Dublin, remember me affectionately to him. I am pleased to hear that his affair is in so good a way; but should be glad to hear the particulars. The letter which you mention, has never come to Mrs. Sheridan's hands; for she has not received a line from you since our arrival here. Give my love to Knowles, and tell him that I had nothing to say worth paying a shilling for, and there are no franks to be had here; but I shall write to him soon.

R

My

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My head is so much out of order that I can add no more;  
but that I am,

Most sincerely and

Affectionately yours,

THOMAS SHERIDAN.

If you answer this immediately, I shall probably receive  
it on my arrival in London. Direct to Bow-street as usual.

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MR. SHERIDAN TO MR. WHYTE.

HARROW, SEPTEMBER 4TH, 1764.

DEAR SAM,

I HAD the pleasure of receiving yours, soon after my  
arrival here, which was delayed by a few visits on the road.  
I have not yet been at London; but some of my friends have  
been to see me here. They have now under deliberation  
what plan will be best for me to pursue; a few days will de-  
termine the most material point, and you shall immediately  
know the result. Dick Chamberlaine I find is arrived; but  
I have heard no particulars of him; I expect to know all  
about him this evening, from Mrs. Sheridan, who has been  
some days in London on business, and is to return to-day. I  
shall write shortly to you again, upon important matters;  
at present I only write to shew you, that I mean to be a  
punctual correspondent, however little I may have to say,  
and to desire that you will direct your letters to the care of  
Mr. Chamberlaine, till I send you another address, *as I am*  
*about to shift my quarters.* I beg you will make my best  
compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Guinness, and believe me to  
be always

Sincerely and

Affectionately yours, &c.

THOMAS SHERIDAN.

MR.



MR. SHERIDAN TO MR. WHYTE.

BLOIS, OCTOBER 14TH, 1764.

YOU see, my dear SAM, by the above date, that I have carried my design into execution, of retiring for some time into France. My friends were unanimously of opinion that it was the best measure I could take, in order to have leisure to finish my work, without which I could have no farther pretensions to any favours. My state of health too made it absolutely necessary that I should remove into a better climate; for, as my disorder was gaining ground, I should not have been able to do any thing in England. The air here is inconceivably fine, and the alteration it has already made in me makes me confidently hope for a perfect cure. Mrs. Sheridan, Charles and the two girls are with me; Dick continues at Harrow. We are very busy in making all our necessary arrangements, so that I have not time at present to enter into a detail of our affairs. The journey was considerably expensive; but the cheapness of the place will make full amends. I could support my family here better upon a hundred pounds a year than upon five in London. We live in a very commodious cottage on the Banks of the Loire, in the suburbs of the town. This river is the most beautiful of any in France, and the country around delightful. French is spoken and taught in its greatest purity; and all other articles for the children's education are to be had at a very cheap rate. As I can now bid defiance to my merciless creditors, I shall be able to make such terms with them before my return as will make me easy for the rest of my life.

Pray make my most affectionate compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Guinnes. I was sorry I could not see him in London; but I did not think it safe to go there, and I set out for Dover the day after I heard of his arrival. I shall be always  
glad

glad to hear of their welfare, and beg you will not fail to give me accounts of them when you write; my best regards and good wishes attend also Mr. and Mrs. Calderwood. I send you enclosed a letter to Knowles, as I think you are at present better able to pay the postage than he; but don't tell him I said so. You see I use you without ceremony; I consider you as my friend; for,

I am sincerely

Yours, &c.

THOMAS SHERIDAN.

Direct to me, A Monsieur, Monsieur Sheridan, chez Madame des Combes, au Bourgh St. Jean, a Blois.

MR. SHERIDAN TO MR. WHYTE.

BLOIS, DECEMBER 1ST, 1764.

DEAR SAM,

I HAVE been for some time in the greatest surprise, and under the utmost uneasiness at not hearing any thing from Dublin. I wrote to you soon after my arrival here, with a letter inclosed to Knowles. I wrote at the same time to some other friends; but not a line have I had in answer. I fear, I should rather say hope, that my letters have some how miscarried; for such a neglect of my friends, in my present situation, would be insupportable. I have received much benefit from the air of this country, which is reckoned the purest in France, and I can labour hard now without feeling any ill effects from it. Mrs. Sheridan too is much better; the children too are in the highest health and spirits, and hard at work to acquire French, as they are not allowed to speak a word of English, except on Sundays. Our situation here is as comfortable as we could hope for in our present circumstances.

stances. When I know that my letters reach you I have much to write to you about. Your letter directed for me in London, did not reach that place till after my departure; but was enclosed to me some time since by my brother Chamberlaine. There were a few lines in it from a lady, which call for an answer.

I am much obliged to you, my Dear Madam, for your kind remembrance of me, and the solicitude you express at the unhappy state of my affairs. Had Dublin abounded with such good hearts as yours, I might still have been employed in the service of my country. But I hope yet to be in a state of serving them, when I shall neither need their assistance, nor value their thanks. The ingratitude of the Public has been a general topic in all ages and countries, and a wise man is to lay his account, that he will never meet with any thing else, in return for his endeavours to serve the many-headed monster. I hope your state of health is better than it was, and that Mr. Guinness, my dear little pupil, Bob, and Dick are well. My best wishes ever attend you all.

Now, Sam, to return to you, though it is only to bid you farewell. If I do not receive an answer to this in due time, I shall be under terrible apprehensions.

Yours ever,

THOMAS SHERIDAN.

Direct A Monsieur, Monsieur Sheridan, chez Madame De Combes Bourgh St. Jean, a Blois.

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MR. SHERIDAN TO MR. WHYTE.

BLOIS, MAY 24TH, 1765.

DEAR SAM,

I HAVE had a long fit of my old disorder, which has lain heavy upon me for almost three months past. This malady is to me of the most mortifying nature in the world; for at a  
time

time when I was pushing on vigorously a work, which it is of the utmost importance to me to finish as soon as possible, it put as effectual a stop to my progress, as if it had deprived me of the use of my hands. Its nature is to take the mind prisoner and bind up all its faculties, as the gout does those of the body. The least attention, even to the writing of a letter, becomes then an insupportable fatigue. Thoughts however continue to circulate; but they will take their own free course, and will suffer no constraint. The tyranny of thought over the mind, when the power of guiding or confining its course is taken away, is a cruel one. One train of reflection has succeeded to another in this way, without bringing any thing of pleasant with them. The several scenes and designs of my past life presented themselves at different times to view, without affording any consolation, but in the rectitude of my intentions; and upon the whole I find my situation in life, very similar to that which is admirably drawn by Pope, where in answer to the Question, *What is it to be wise?* He says:

'Tis but to know how little can be known,  
 To see all others faults, and feel our own:  
 Condemned in business or in arts to drudge,  
 Without a second, or without a judge.  
 Truths would you teach, or save a sinking land,  
 All fear, none aid you, and few understand:  
 Painful pre-eminence! yourself to view,  
 Above life's weakness and its comforts too.

One of the greatest comforts of life, I have often been cruelly disappointed in; I mean friendship: However, that shall not make me give up my expectation of still finding that best balm of an afflicted mind, in the few for whom I still feel it, and from whom I expect a return. I will believe that you are INCAPABLE of change in that respect; but wish you  
 would



would give me more frequent marks that I still live in your memory. Let us have no retrospects; be a good boy for the future, and I promise you I'll keep pace with you. I find myself much better within these two or three days, and hope the warm weather will set me up. In every other respect, except that cursed disorder, I find myself much benefited by this excellent climate. Before the last attack, however, I had finished my Dictionary, and was entering upon my Grammar; I shall now try to make up lost time.

Mrs. Sheridan has finished a Comedy, which I think an excellent one, spick and span new throughout. She is now employed in concluding the Memoirs of Sidney Biddulph; to which she was solicited by abundance of people before her departure for England. She bestows many maledictions on the French, which quarrels with her tongue. The children are making great progress in it; and I have made such advances that I am their master.

The unreasonable part of the creditors, still adhere to their absurd maxims, so that I know not when I shall have it in my power to return. I am much pleased at the account you give me of Mr. Guinness; but what a plague became of your geography, when you talked of his making Blois his way to Lyons. My best wishes attend Mrs. Guinness, and her little family. Pray, Sam, write to me often; send all manner of news, good or bad; you cannot conceive what little things give pleasure at such a distance. Mrs. Sheridan and all the little ones send their loves.

I am ever sincerely  
And affectionately,  
Yours, &c.

THOMAS SHERIDAN.

These letters from Mr. and Mrs. Sheridan, with the two former, annexed to our REMARKS on Boswell, &c. which in the strict order of time should have taken place here, include  
the

the whole of what was judged necessary for the illustration and confirmation of facts on the present occasion. The following letter is in answer to one sent to Mr. Burton of London, together with a printed copy of heads of a plan laid before a select committee of the Hibernian Society, then lately instituted in Dublin, for the Improvement of Education, and for carrying Mr. Sheridan's Scheme into immediate execution.

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MR. BURTON\* TO MR. WHYTE.

JUNE 12TH, 1758.

DEAR SIR,

YOU see by my abhorrence of all delay, in returning an answer to your first letter, how greatly desirous I am of giving birth to that correspondence you are pleased to mention. My activity in this article is in effect a speedy return made to a first visit: which is no less an overture to future friendship, than it is an earnest of an immediate esteem. Men of letters are the game, of which I am in continual pursuit; and where I am so happy as to find the least traces of learning, like SCIPIO ÆMILIANUS, I hug the bewitching creature: and though perhaps, I may not be so fortunate as he was, to meet with a POLYBIUS, or a PANÆTIUS, yet I experience a certain degree of warmth in such a sunshine, in which I delight to wanton.

From

\* Edmund Burton, Esq. M. A. Counsellor at Law, and sometime Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. This gentleman has occasionally enriched the Common-wealth of Letters with several valuable productions. Among others, *The Satyrs of Persius*, translated into English, with Notes critical and explanatory, by Edmund Burton, Esq. Barrister at Law, appeared in 1752, which is the book to which he alludes in the latter part of the letter. . . . He was by marriage great-uncle to Mrs. Whyte, on the maternal side; a family nearly related to Serjeant Hewitt, late Lord High Chancellor of Ireland.

From hence you may naturally conclude, as I have discovered a taste and discernment in you inferior to few; that I promise myself much satisfaction, from whatever observations you will favour me with. They will excite and enliven that zeal (for I profess no more) I have for literary pursuits; which, too frequently, for want of those in whom I would wish to find the same dispositions with myself, sickens and dies away. Should you now and then communicate any thing you think curious in your reading; and sometimes send me a gem, which you have picked out of the rich mines of antiquity, that I may survey its beauties as well as yourself; you will make me happy, by keeping that flame alive.

I must confess to you, at the same time, though, in this part of the world, I can seldom converse with such a one as yourself (the little, mechanical, groveling genius, prevailing mostly hereabouts) I find a comfortable retreat, for want of action, among my books and papers: and I dare say, you are never better pleased with Tully, than when, from a too great satiety of company, which was often his case, and the very reverse of mine, he confesses himself to be most pleased amidst his books and statues. *Summum me eorum studium tenet*, &c. is an expression of that great man, which at the same time that it shews the generous ardour of his mind, must needs inspire all those who view him in this light, with a fondness for his memory, that knows no bounds. But I'll tire you no longer with idle descants of this nature. I'll proceed to the contents of your letter, from which I can plainly see, that you have not read that great man's letters to Atticus in vain. Give me leave to congratulate you upon the success, that is likely to attend the establishment of a Gymnasium in Ireland. I'll venture to say, no considerable part of that success will be owing to any one, who is better able to conduct his part in it, than yourself. I admire the  
plan

plan you were so kind to send me, and the more so, as it is greatly destitute of all that shallow pedantry, generally observable in institutions of this nature. A rich vein of imagination runs through the whole. There is visibly a mind that thinks well, and a resolution bold to execute what it thinks. Superior to all mechanical rules, the Author of this plan considers things, not as they are, but as they should be. 'Tis owing to a contempt of nature and reason, that Schools and Universities are the Asylums for ignorance. Should the execution be equal to the spirit of the plan, there will be no danger that the architect will alter his model, and descend to think ill, for the common venal reason, because it is sometimes more interesting to think ill, than to think well. Honour, shame and pleasure, are three incentives for the younger part of life, which the wisest of the ancients had not courage enough to propose. Such a mixed scene of action and contemplation as is here intended, far out-does the admired Republic of Plato: since every article in the former is practical, whereas most of the maxims in the latter must ever be ideal.

You mention the book I desired Mrs. Whyte to convey to you. It is a trifle not worth your acceptance. I should have desired your acceptance of it, when I had your company, had I thought it any way deserving of it. I begin to have a very mean opinion of it; for there are many things I see in it, which I wish had been otherwise.

Mrs. Whyte's great distance from her friends, you say, has produced that uneasiness, which is often consequential to it. 'Tis a kind of fine, that nature sets upon us, for quitting those usages and customs, which are, with propriety, said to be a second nature. To part with what we have been long acquainted, is a loss, say some, superior to all requital.

Nos Patriæ fines, &c.

you



you know very well, is a complaint as old as Virgil; if not as old as the Creation. The occasion of their removal was necessity. Mrs. Whyte's has been choice. Time, experience, familiarity with the place, added to your more prevailing influence, will make all things easy to her; and she must very soon know,

. . . . . levius fit patentiâ  
Quicquid corrigere est nefas.

I am, Dear Sir,  
Your most obedient  
And sincere

Petty-France,  
Westminster.

Humble servant,  
EDMUND BURTON.

Mrs. Burton joins with me in her best affections to you and Mrs. Whyte.

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The great object of all Mr. Sheridan's pursuits, respecting himself, was independence; to be attained, not by prostituting his talents to the sinister views of a party, and gulling the multitude with inflammatory harangues, but by his own personal exertions in some scheme of practical utility;\* the foremost of which he considered Education. To this end, December 6th, 1757, he gave a public breakfast at the Music-hall in Fishamble-street; after which he pronounced an Oration on the Institution of Youth, before a very numerous and respectable audience, previously invited for the purpose; many of the first characters in the kingdom, for rank and learning, were present; who, not only concurred with him in sentiment, but as an earnest of their determination to give his scheme energy and support, entered into an immediate subscription,

\* See note on a former occasion, page 81.

subscription, amounting to near one thousand pounds sterling, to enable him to proceed; and formed themselves into a body under the name of the Hibernian Society for the Improvement of Education; a treasurer and proper officers for the better conducting the same, were also chosen, and after several meetings and consultations, a select committee out of the body at large was appointed, to consider Mr. Sheridan's proposals in the detail; which on minute investigation were unanimously approved, and reported accordingly. Thus far having accomplished his point, and proper persons, as he imagined, being fixed on to conduct the business in his absence, at the close of the season 1758, he went to England for the purpose, among others, of procuring suitable masters; but when he thought, good easy man, full surely his glories were a ripening, his ill stars were conspiring to undo him. Advantage was taken of his situation. The real or supposed prejudices subsisting against his profession were played off against him, and letters upon letters were sent him, to shew that an Actor, at the head of such a Seminary, would be an insurmountable obstacle to its success. It was a specious manoeuvre, and he voluntarily relinquished, at least for the present, the conduct of a scheme, for which he was decidedly competent, and which he had been labouring to accomplish the better part of his life. He surrendered however upon certain stipulated conditions, which conditions were never complied with, and the only favour he obtained was the liberty of nominating a substitute.

Sometime after the plan was in part carried into execution; and, on a general acceptance of the principles laid down by Mr. Sheridan, the Hibernian Academy, King-street, Oxmantown, was opened under the superintendancy of the Reverend Dr. Leland, S. F. T. C. D. Monday, January 8, 1759. Mr. Barry Yelverton, now Lord Yelverton, Chief Baron of his Majesty's

Majesty's Court of Exchequer in Ireland, was elected head classic-master, and the Reverend Mr. Williamson, who had lately opened school in Queen-street, was appointed Mr. Yelverton's co-adjutor, in the second chair. The English department was all along, from the beginning, intended for my Father; and Dr. Leland, with whom he was on a footing of particular intimacy, was very solicitous that he should undertake it; for in an institution where the advancement and perfection of the English Language was the leading principle, on the dereliction of the original founder, my Father, being perfectly possessed of his ideas and happy modes of instruction, was thought the only one competent to supply the vacancy, and discharge the duties of that important department. But being apprized, that Mr. Sheridan had relinquished his station as superintendant, and having a flourishing establishment of his own, he declined accepting the Doctor's offer. Mr. Williamson not very long after dying, and Mr. Yelverton having gone to the Temple, the Reverend John Fletcher was appointed sole Master. A year or two after he also died, and made room for his successor, the Reverend Andrew Buck. By this time the principles upon which the Seminary was instituted were in a great measure laid aside and forgotten; the subscribers did not think it necessary to renew their subscriptions; many of them indeed were never fulfilled; and it was left like any other school to take its chance. Mr. Buck was a man of learning and some experience, having had a school at Stephen's-green some years before he moved to King-street on the demise of Mr. Fletcher, and under his conduct this new establishment flourished several years with deserved reputation; at his death, the house being much out of repair, it was neglected, and the institution fell to the ground.

Had Mr. Sheridan been a man of the world, he probably would have played his cards better, and never would have  
been

been supplanted. But, elated with his partial success, in stating to the society the pecuniary arrangements, particularly for the professors in their respective departments, which were liberal to a degree, and touching his expectations of emolument to himself, which were founded on a contingency of surplus after defraying every expence, he was too explicit; perhaps too sanguine. His arguments were indeed cogent, and his conclusions gained him credit and applause; but his frankness awakened jealousy, and exposed him to invidious attacks. The prospect he exhibited was a temptation to circumvent him, and among his hearers unluckily there were some, who neither wanted inclination nor ability to speculate upon his capital. That was the rock he split upon, and but for that, to a moral certainty, he might have arrived at that state of independence for which he panted; and at this day, his family, though fortunately in situations that don't want it, might have derived honour and advantage from so noble an Institution.

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The three following letters are in no respect whatever connected with the general subject of the preceding pages; but, for their intrinsic merit, were thought worthy of preserving. They are the only remains of a lady sometime deceased, addressed to her preceptor by the amiable writer, in her seventeenth year. Her beauty and personal accomplishments rendered her a conspicuous ornament in the circles of the young and gay; and, for the due exercise of every domestic virtue, in private life, she was, by all who had the happiness of her acquaintance, esteemed a pattern of excellence. She was married at a very early age, wealthily, perhaps not happily; yet in the midst of opulence and temptation, she was never influenced by fashion or caprice to the neglect of  
any



any religious or moral obligation. Having laudably discharged every duty of an affectionate and tender mother to two lovely infants, in giving life to a third she forfeited her own. She was an only child; her disconsolate parents with her lost every comfort and did not long survive. These unstudied essays of her juvenile pen will give the reader a faint idea of what she might have been, had it pleased Heaven to spare her.

TO MR. WHYTE, GRAFTON-STREET, DUBLIN.

MINIKIN COTTAGE, SEPT. 28, 1771.

NEVER did I more sincerely wish to see Mr. Whyte than at this minute, your letter has so pleased and perplexed me, that really I am at a loss to answer it. In the first place, your apologies are useless; be assured, after the many great obligations I have received from you, it would be a very hard task to persuade my pride I was forgot; that useful passion had already suggested every thing you obligingly ascribe to my good sense and good nature. I remember you once told me I should by no means indulge pride; but I know you will allow it to be very impolitick as well as ungenerous to cast off an old friend, and such I have often found pride; but never more useful than at present, as it has saved me from so severe a mortification, as believing myself neglected by you. By the dislike you have heard me express to writing letters, I only meant the generality of correspondents to whom one scribbles accounts of marriages, divorces, and deaths, interspersed with unmerited panegyrics, scandalous anecdotes, and moral reflections; but as I think it unnecessary to say I do not hold you in that class, I shall only assure you, I will be very punctual in answering every letter you favour me with. Your wisdom used to appear supernatural to me, and I could almost think so still, for I had more than half resolved to try if I could prevail on you to continue to me the pleasure of  
hearing

hearing from you, without expecting a return; but I felt so much reluctance at losing the pleasure of writing to you, that your disapprobation only was wanting to determine me against it.

Your putting your letter on the footing of a first visit accounts to me for the number of fine compliments it contains; but give me leave to ask, why you are so *very* much afraid I should think you flatter? I cannot express my gratitude for your kind promise of criticism and advice; but I hope to convince you of it by my attention to both, which you are perfectly right in supposing to be ever acceptable. Although your letter has much delighted me, I own it has not satisfied me; for I wished to know many particulars of your journey and voyage which I must wait for till your next; for notwithstanding your question, you have only writ sufficient to make me regret there is no more.

I am come down stairs to my mother for an answer to your flourish of thanks; she says she has received many very great obligations from Mr. Whyte; but never had it in her power to confer one; I now repent I asked her: I don't like such brilliant things from one's mother, there may be ugly comparisons drawn; but I am resolved never to blot any thing I think you can possibly make sense of, as I am sure of a candid allowance for all my faults; however, to avoid mama's wit disgracing mine, I give you notice, that for the future I will not deliver any compliments you shall send me, and also that you are to suppose at the bottom of all my letters, the family join, &c.—In return, whenever I hear from you I will say some very smart thing for you (if I don't forget) in which I will try not to disgrace your invention.

I did not receive your favour till Thursday, when I was dressing for Woolwich assembly; I had some thoughts of  
returning

returning your visit in full dress; but my head was that day so full of what was to happen, and the next day of what had happened, that I thought it was much better to let my ideas subside a little, (which you know they soon do.) This I mention to account to you for a delay of three days in acknowledging the high obligation I am under to you for this last proof of your attention to me.

My uncle K \*\*\* is at Tunbridge, and I know you will be glad to hear he is much better. I think I have obeyed you now fully, as you will soon have my answer, and it is of a very reasonable extent; so I will detain you no longer than to assure you once more, that your letters will ever be most welcome to,

Dear Sir,

Your grateful and

Affectionate Pupil,

M.-A. K \*\*\*.

TO MR. W H Y T E.

CHARLTON, AUGUST 6, 1772.

DEAR SIR,

YOUR letter, though by date it should have come much sooner, was not received until yesterday, when a gentleman left that and a book; but neither his name nor address.

You cannot imagine my surprise on finding you had complied with the request in my last; for I assure you, upon my word of honour, I never received any thing from you since your letter of November the 9th, and I can answer for Miss Cooper, whom I had the pleasure of seeing several times last winter, and never without mutual enquiries about Mr. Whyte. She feared you were ill, and often said she would write; but I thought you had not time to spare for

T

your

your trifling correspondent; so left you to your leisure, resolving to be thankful for the few favours you would vouchsafe me, and to wait with patience for them. I am greatly mortified by thinking how much pleasure I have lost by the negligence of that wicked Mr. Johnson; not only in reading the valuable writings he has detained, but in the suspension of a correspondence I so highly esteemed. The only excuse he can make is, that he was sensible of the value of what you committed to his care, and suffered self-love to get the better of probity; however, I will search after him, for which purpose I wish you had given me a more explicit direction. I do not wonder at the anger so visible in your letter, nor does it give me much pain, as I know this will remove it; for which I am so impatient, that in spite of curiosity, and a violent tooth-ach, I have sat down to write without even reading in the book, you so condescendingly sent me, 'till I discharge my conscience by writing. So I will not thank you before I know for what.

Miss Cooper (whom I shall write to as soon as I conclude this) spent the winter in London; but had not the pleasure she proposed herself there, as Mrs. Hamilton was in great distress most of the time for poor Miss Hamilton, whose life was despaired of, for a long time, as she had a dangerous fever, and recovered very slowly, while her Father was in Ireland; but I have the pleasure of informing you she is much better, and going to Bristol for the restoration of her health, which I sincerely hope will have the desired effect.

Miss K\*\*\*k, an intimate friend of Miss Cooper's, whom you might have seen with her at Bromley, had a violent fever about the same time, which settled in her brain; she lived for some months in the most deplorable state of madness, so that her death was considered as a blessing by her friends.

Miss Cooper is returned to her lodgings at Bromley.

I did



I did not expect that the next letter I wrote you, would contain apologies for myself; for on the contrary, I intended it to be in the true spirit of haughtiness, as I did not think you could plead an excuse sufficient for your breach of promise, in not coming at Christmas; however I have it under your own hand, that you will come now, therefore shall keep all my reproaches 'till I see you, and if you write to me immediately that I am forgiven my unintentional offence, and come very soon, perhaps I shall shew my wonderful placable disposition, and graciously remit your fault; but if you do not bring your apology in person—take the consequence.

I should have told you long before, that my Father and Mother are very glad to hear from you now, and were very sorry not to hear sooner; that they hope to see you this summer, but fear they shall not, well knowing you are a gentleman very liable to accidents, and disappointing your friends, as already mentioned, &c. &c. But I have said so much about my own joy and sorrow that I will not repeat theirs; but must beg you will write to me as soon as convenient after the receipt of this, as you know you are in my debt for the rest of your journey from England, your last account ending at your arrival at Conway.

My Mother desires me to tell you she hopes to see you before you get this, so I will not detain you longer than to remind you, that your presence will give real pleasure to us all; but particularly to

Your grateful and

Impatient pupil,

M.-A. K \* \* \*.

P. S. Dr. Hawkefworth's petulance and your cool and gentlemanlike manner of taking him down, is much talked of at Bromley; and I can truly assure you, that, even at his own door, the tide of approbation runs strongly in your favour.

To

TO MR. WHYTE, GRAFTON-STREET, DUBLIN.

LONDON, DEC. 7, 1772.

DEAR SIR,

ON communicating your welcome letter (which arrived this day) to my Father, he desired I would write immediately to suspend your intentions of sending over the books, as he apprehends they will be liable to a very high duty if imported either bound or sewed; however, he will inform himself particularly, and write to you in a few days. The multiplicity of daily publications here has, I suppose, prevented my seeing any extracts from your works, especially as we don't take the paper which contains the poem you mention; but I will endeavour to find it out. I make no doubt of the book succeeding to your wishes; there are numerous pieces in it whose beauty must strike every reader, though there are some which will be best relished by those who know the persons or circumstances they allude to.

I shall not say we were disappointed at your not mentioning any intention of not visiting us this Christmas—we are now so accustomed to expect you by your own promise, that I suppose it is to be a favour, that you now plainly shew us you don't intend to come; 'tis very well, Sir; but I have hopes that you may be obliged to come yet, painful as the journey seems to be to you; for you must allow, that if you were on the spot you could transact this business better yourself, than any other can for you; besides, I don't think my Father understands it, and, in short, for every reason I would advise you to come in person, though I have no expectations that you will: a thought strikes me that you may intend it; but out of pure contradiction you have concealed it; if so, that is really very cruel, and I am sadly mortified with it, by the sight of so much blank paper at the end of your letter; indeed I never intended any such hint as you seem to think about

about the length of your favours, and I promise you I would much rather fill my paper, be it ever so large, than receive such another tantalizing epistle as your last: I am vexed as often as I look on it, and reflect what a number of ingenious sentences might have shined on that space much to my pleasure and advantage, or how far you might have continued your journal, which I now despair of ever seeing concluded. I beg you will not revenge yourself again without knowing you have cause to be offended; for I am sure you will not look upon any thing unintentional as such, and I assure you it was my humility (which I now most heartily repent of) that caused that unfortunate paragraph. There is but one part of your letter I like; I don't ask pardon for saying so, both because I have leave to criticize upon your writings, and because I am now afraid to apologize for any thing, as you know people who have severely suffered for one fault, are too apt to run into the opposite extreme: that one part is where you give me an opportunity of obliging you, which will be ever most acceptable to me; but the rest of the letter contains only insisting upon the confirmation of a promise I was always unwilling to make, scolding, flattering, and threatening me for endeavouring to escape it, and intreaties to make your presence here useless to yourself; I must tell you I don't like such letters, which is an expression I thought it would have been impossible for me to have used to you; but I am so provoked at the delicate malice of your last page, that I am resolved to be saucy in order to try if that will produce an answer that may compensate by its length and speed, for my disappointment in the last.

In spite of my anger I can't help telling you, that if any thing else should occur to you wherein we can serve you, we shall with great pleasure execute your orders; but we shall be yet more pleased if you will come yourself and settle the  
 matter

matter in person. I hope neither "unavoidable necessity," nor Lord Louth, will detain you this vacation from paying that visit to London which has been so long expected by your friends here; but by none more impatiently than,

Dear Sir,

Your most grateful Pupil,

M.-A. K \* \* \*.

THIS little Miscellaneous Production is now brought to a final period. The following letter, concise and simple as it is (together with the answer) is inserted as one proof at least, that ancient virtue is not wholly banished the earth; and by the few who have minds yet tuned to the consolations of Friendship, it will not be deemed an unsuitable conclusion. It affords a sketch of disinterested attachment, that commenced between the parties at school, and, though early called off by very different pursuits, and scarcely ever three months together resident in the same kingdom, is of upwards of half a century's duration.\* A rare example in any age, and hardly to have been expected in critical times like the present! †

*Amicus certus cernitur in incerta re.*

Such

\* Mr. Vickers, the writer of the letter, was many years an officer in the army, and did the State some service. He had a brother also at the same school, Lewis Vickers, who had afterwards a command in the navy, and to the infinite regret of all who knew him, lost his life in the excess of his ardour against a superior force.

† The desperate state of insecurity, which, at the period alluded to, prevailed in Ireland, is sufficiently notorious. The accounts of a traitorous combination formed in that kingdom, "the most dangerous and singular which is to be found in the annals of the civilized world," (1) had been carried over and spread throughout Wales. Numbers of families, infirm old men, women and children, of consideration and opulence at home, had fled thither from the horrors of unbridled robbery and assassination,

which

(1) *Ld. Chancellor's speech in answer to Ld. Moira, Mond. Feb. 19, 1798.*



Such an incident in the boasted ages of antiquity, under Greek or Roman names, could not fail of celebrity. Poets would have adorned it in lofty and heroic song; Moralists would have descanted upon it in their treatises; and Critics and Commentators would have blazoned it forth in glowing and permanent colours: but, a truce to pedantry; with your leave, courteous Reader! the letter shall be its own interpreter.

To SAMUEL WHYTE, Esq. GRAFTON-STREET, DUBLIN.

HOLYHEAD, THE 29TH MAY, 1798.

DEAR MR. WHYTE,

DUBLIN seems to be in a very unpleasant state; you and your old friend are at a time of life, that retirement is most agreeable to them both; come over to me; take your chance with a bachelor, where you will have a warm bed and a hearty welcome. I beg my best compliments to your Son and Daughter: I am,

My dear Mr. WHYTE,

Yours sincerely,

WILLIAM VICKERS.

To

which pervaded most parts of that distracted country, and raged at the very doors of the capital; and many of those unhappy fugitives are at this day, [July the 20th, 1798] wandering about dependent on the casual bounty of the hospitable natives of that ancient and renowned principality. The communication between the two shores is in all cases open and convenient; they had the printed documents of whatever was in agitation, confirmed by numerous living testimony, in their hands. They had heard that a horde of midnight conspirators had dispersed themselves through every quarter of the metropolis, for the purpose of its destruction: the taking of their Chief, a man of high pedigree, Saturday May the 19th, though it gave them a momentary check, in fact accelerated their design; and the night of the 23d was fixed on for a general rising, to burn the city, and without distinction of age or sex, to massacre the peaceable inhabitants of every description; and so imminent was the crisis of their fate, that, if but a single hour more had elapsed without prevention, the blow would have been struck. It was also universally known in Wales, that Dublin was proclaimed in a state of insurrection, and subject to martial law; and that the bloody ensigns of rebellion, with all its savage concomitants, braved defiance to the laws in open day, displaying scenes of treachery and devastation thro' the country from one end to the other; under these impressions, Mr. Vickers' friendly invitation was dispatched.

TO WILLIAM VICKERS, ESQ. HOLYHEAD.

DUBLIN, JUNE 6TH, 1798.

MY VERY DEAR AND VALUABLE OLD FRIEND,

I HAVE received your very kind and welcome letter, and estimate your good intention and friendly invitation at this perilous juncture, as I ought. I do most sincerely assure you, nothing that has happened these many years, has more thoroughly gratified the feelings of my heart; and I have only to regret, that at present I cannot avail myself of your kindness. The Almighty Disposer of Events, who has hitherto been my Protector, has appointed me a station to maintain, and I must not desert my post. I have a Son and Daughter and three infant Grand-children, whose Protector under God I still am, and to whom my presence is necessary, and cannot reconcile it to myself to abandon them in these troublesome times; troublesome indeed they truly are. Hereafter I may take advantage of your kindness. Wales is a delightful, a happy country, to which you know I have long looked forwards as an asylum in the evening of life, from anxiety and fatigue, of which my portion has not been a small one; and I really think there are few living who could more cordially guard the fire-side, and smoke a comfortable pipe together, than your old friend and you. I am no politician, and therefore, at present, can entertain you with little in that way; things however, I imagine, are not growing worse; rather, I would persuade myself, taking a turn for the better; though really bad enough. In hopes, therefore, of their coming about, I close my letter, wishing you every happiness, with this assurance, that I am

My worthy Friend,

*Grafton-street, No. 75.*

Most sincerely yours,

SAMUEL-WHYTE.



THE Origin of the Story of the HERMIT AND THE ANGEL was a subject of much enquiry in the days of Addison, Pope and Swift; and the late publication of it in the Third Edition of WHYTE'S POEMS, from that obsolete folio of Wynkyn de Worde's, has been a new spur to the curiosity of the Literati: happy had it been for the Present Times, if Speculations equally harmless could have contented them. The old fashioned dress in which we have restored it to the Public, though evidently the same in which it was originally introduced to the English Reader, appears to be a translation; it is said, from the French. The French copy we have not seen; nor perhaps any one else, in this, or the preceding century; but by persevering research, the story has been traced to one of the rarest in the catalogues of rare books, the GESTA ROMANORUM; which, after long and almost hopeless enquiry, was discovered in the library of Trinity College, Dublin. CC. 23, 15. It is termed an octavo, probably a pot octavo, being precisely five inches four-tenths, by three inches eight-tenths. Two-third of the title, from top to bottom, is irregularly torn away, and, being of a quaint device, cannot be made out: The imprint is wanting; but, by the imperfect remains, it seems to have been edited somewhere in France. It is close set in a small Gothic type, and almost in every line we meet with words strangely contracted; for instance, *Hois* for *Hominis*; *mie*, *misericordiae*; *Oi*, *Omni*, &c. The folia or leaves, not paged; but numbered, as customary with our earliest typographers, making in all 172, containing 181 capitula or chapters, with a colophon annexed, as follows, viz.

*Ex Gestis Romanorum cum pluribus applicatis Hystoriis de Virtutibus ac Vitiis mystice ad intellectus transumptis recollectorii. Finis, Experi. Anno, nostre salutis MCCCCCVIII.*

For an Account of this extraordinary Book, see Tyrwhitt's Chaucer, vol. iv. and Warton's English Poetry, vol. iii.

From the Edition of 1508, we now give the archetype, to which our old Black Letter Friends, Dr. Henry More and their several successors, are indebted.

## HERMITA,

**Ex Gestis Romanorum, Ca. lxxx. Fo. lxxv.**

DE VERSUTIA DIABOLI ET QUOD JUDICIA DEI SUNT OCCULTA.

**E**RAT quidam Heremita qui cum in speluncâ quâdam jacebat et diebus ac noctibus devotè Deo serviebat. Juxta cellam suam erat quidam pastor ovium qui pascebat oves. Accidit uno die quod pastor erat somno oppressus, ipso dormiente quidam latro venit et omnes oves secum abstulit. Superveniens Dominus ovium a pastore querit ubi erant oves. Ille vero incepit jurare quod oves perdidit, sed quod penitus ignorabat. Dominus hoc audiens furore repletus ipsum occidit. Heremita hoc videns ait in corde suo, O Deus! ecce homo iste culpam innocenti dedit et ipsum occidit. Ex quo ergo permittis talia fieri propter hoc ad mundum vadamus sicut cæteri vitam ducam. His cogitatis ille Heremitarium dimisit et ad mundum perrexit: sed Deus ipsum perdere nolebat. Angelum, in formâ Hominis, ad eum misit ut se ei associaret. Quem cum Angelus in via euntem invenisset; ait ei. Charissime! quo vadis? Ad ille; Ad istam civitatem ante me. Angelus dixit ei. Ego in via ero comes tuus quod Angelus Dei sum et ad te veni ut simus focii in hac via. Ambo ambulabant adversus civitatem. Cum autem intrassent hospitium a quodam milite propter Dei amorem petebant. Miles vero satis gratanter eos recepit et honorificè, ac splendide cumque bonâ devotione in omnibus ministravit. Miles iste tum unicum filium habebat in cunabulis jacentem quem multum diligebat. Cœnâ factâ Camera est aperta et lecti satis honorificè ornati pro Angelo et Heremitâ. Mediâ vero nocte surrexit Angelus et puerum in cunabulis strangu-  
lavit. Hoc videns Heremita intra se cogitavit. Nunquid iste erat Angelus Dei? Bonus miles omnia necessaria propter Dei amorum ei dedit et non habuit nisi unicum filium innocentem et iste eum occidit; sed tamen non audebat ei quicquam dicere. Manè ambo surrexerunt et ad civitatem aliam perrexerunt

in



THE PARABLE OF THE  
EREMITE AND THE ANGEL,

ACCORDING TO DR. HENRY MORE.

DIALOGUE II, CHAP. XXIV.

A CERTAIN *Eremite* having conceived great jealousies touching the due administration of Divine Providence in external occurrences in the world, in this anxiety of mind was resolved to leave his cell, and travel abroad, to see with his own eyes how things went abroad in the world. He had not gone half a day's journey, but a young man overtook him and joyn'd company with him, and insinuated himself so far into the *Eremite's* affection, that he thought himself very happy in that he had got so agreeable a companion. Wherefore resolving to take their fortunes together, they always lodged in the same house. Some few days travels had over-past before the *Eremite* took notice of any thing remarkable. But at last he observed that his Fellow-traveller, with whom he had contracted so intimate a friendship, in an house where they were extraordinary well treated, stole away a gilt cup from the gentleman of the house, and carried it away with him. The *Eremite* was very much astonished with what he saw done by so fair and agreeable a person as he conceived him to be, but thought not yet fit to speak to him or seem to take notice of it. And therefore they travel fairly on together as aforesaid, till night forced them to seek lodging. But they light upon such an house as had a very unhospitable owner, who shut them out into the outward court, and exposed them all night to the injury of the open weather, which chanced then to be very rainy; but the *Eremite's* fellow-traveller unexpectedly compensated his host's ill entertainment with no meaner a reward than the gilt cup he had carried away from the former place,  
thrusting

in qua in domo unius civis fatis honorificè fuerunt recepti et splendide ministrati. Civis iste quendam aureum cyphum quem miro modo dilexit, habuit in quo ultra modum gloriabatur. Media nocte surrexit Angelus et furatus est cyphum illum. Heremita hoc videns intra se cogitabat; iste malus Angelus est ut credo. Iste civis nobis optime fecit et iste furatus est cyphum suum. tamen nihil ei loquebatur quia timuit eum. Mane vero surrexerunt et per viam ambulabant, donec ad quandam aquam pervenerunt ultra quam erat pons: pontem ascenderunt et quidam pauper iis obviabat. Ait Angelus, charissime! monstra nobis viam versus talem civitatem. Pauper vertit se et cum digito viam versus civitatem ostendit. Cum vero vertisset se Angelus subito per scapulas eum accepit et ultra pontem projecit, et submersus est pauper. Quod cum Heremita vidisset, ait in corde suo, scio jam quod iste diabolus est et non Angelus Dei bonus. Quid mali fecit pauper iste? et tamen eum occidit. Ab illo tempore cogitabat ab eo discedere; verum timens nihil loquebatur ei. Cum vero circa horam vespertinam ad civitatem pervenissent ad domum cuiusdam divitis acceperunt et hospitium pro Dei amore petebant; ille vero simpliciter eis negavit, ait Angelus Dei. Amore Dei saltem tectum domus nobis concedatis ne lupi aut malæ bestiae hic nos devorent. Ille ait; Ecce domus ubi porci mei jacent; si placet vobis cum eis jacere potestis; sin autem recedatis quod alium locum vobis non dabo. Ait ei Angelus; si aliud non potest fieri, cum porcis vestris jacebimus et sic factum est. Mane vero surrexerunt, Angelus hospitem vocavit et ait, Charissime! do tibi cyphum istum, et dedit ei cyphum quem furatus fuerat ab illo cive. Heremita hoc videns, ait intra se. Jam sum expertus quod iste est diabolus. Bonus homo erat qui cum omni devotione nos recepit et furatus est ei cyphum et dedit isti pessimo qui negavit nobis hospitium. Ait Angelo. Nolo vobiscum amplius expectare ad Deum vos recomendo. Angelus dixit ei: Audite me et tunc recedito.

thrusting it in at the window when they departed. This the Eremite thought was very pretty, and that it was not covetousness, but humour, that made him take it away from its first owner. The next night, where they lodged, they were treated again with a deal of kindness and civility: but the Eremite observed with horror that his fellow-traveller for an ill requital strangled privately a young child of their so courteous host in the cradle. This perplexed the mind of the poor Eremite very much; but in sadness and patience forbearing to speak, he travelled another day's journey with the young man, and at evening took up in a place where they were more made of than any-where hitherto. And because the way they had to travel next morning was not so easie to find, the master of the house commanded one of the servants to go part of the way to direct them; whom, while they were passing over a stone-bridge, the Eremite's fellow-traveller caught suddenly betwixt the legs and pitched him head-long from off the bridge into the river, and drowned him. Here the Eremite could have no longer patience, but flew bitterly upon his fellow-traveller for those barbarous actions, and renounced all friendship with him, and would travel with him no longer nor keep him company. Whereupon the young man smiling at the honest zeal of the Eremite, and putting off his mortal disguise, appeared as he was, in the form and lustre of an angel of God, and told him he was sent to ease his mind of the great anxiety it was incumbered with touching the DIVINE PROVIDENCE. In which, said he, nothing can occur more perplexing and paradoxical than what you have been offended at since we two travelled together. But yet I will demonstrate to you, said he, that all that I have done is very just and right. For as for that first man from whom I took the gilded cup, it was a real compensation

## EXPOSITIO.

Certissime quando eras in Heremitario, dominus ovium pastorem injuste occidit. Scias quod pastor ille pro tunc mortem non meruit; sed alias commisit quare mori non deberet. tunc temporis inventus est sine peccato, Deus ergo permisit eum occidi ut pœnam post mortem evaderet, propter peccatum quod alias committeret pro quo nunquam penitentiâ fecerat. Latro vero quod evasit, cum omnibus ovibus pœnam eternam sustinet, et dominus ovium quod pastorem occidit vitam suam emendabit per largas eleemosynas et opera misericordiæ quam ignoranter fecit. Demum filius istius militis de nocte strangulavi quod nobis bonum hospitium dedit: Scias quod antequam puer ille natus erat miles optimus eleemosynarius erat, et multa opera misericordiæ fecit. Sed postquam natus est puer factus est parcus cupidus et omnia colligit ut puerum divitem faciat sic quod erit causa perditionis ejus et ideo puerum occidi, et jam sicut prius factus est bonus Christianus. Deinde Cyphum illius civis qui nos cum devotione recepit furatus fui. Scias tu quod antequam Cyphus ille erat fabricatus non erat sobrior eo in tota terra; sed tantum de Cypho gaudebat post fabricationem quod omni die tantum de eo bibebat quod bis aut ter omni die fuit inebriatus, et ideo cyphum abstuli et factus est sobrius sicut prius. Deinde pauperem in aquam projeci. Scias quod pauper iste bonus Xtianus fuit; sed si ad dimidium miliare ambulasset alium in peccato mortale occidisset: scias jam est salvatus et regnat in cœlesti gloria. Deinde cyphum illius civis dedi illi quod nobis bonum hospitium negavit. Scias quod nihil in terra sit sine causa. Ipse nobis concessit donum porcorum et ideo cyphum ei dedi et regnabit post vitam in inferno. Pone ergo omni modo custodiam ori tuo ut Deo non detrahas. Ipse enim omnia novit. Heremita hoc audiens cecidit ad pedes Angeli, et veniam petiit ad Heremitarium perrexit et factus est bonus Christianus.



penfation indeed of his hofpitality; that cup being fo forcible an occafion of the good man's diftempering himfelf, and of hazarding his health and life, which would be a great lofs to his poor neighbours, he being of fo good and charitable a nature. But I put it into the window of that harfh and unhofpitable man that ufed us fo ill, not as a booty to him, but as a plague and fcourge to him, and for an eafe to his oppreffed neighbours, that he may fall into intemperance, difeafes, and death itfelf. For I knew very well that there was that enchantment in this cup, that they that had it would be thus bewitched with it. And as for that civil perfon whose child I ftrangled in the cradle, it was in great mercy to him, and no real hurt to the child, who is now with God. But if that child had lived, whereas this gentleman had been piously, charitably and devoutly given, his mind, I faw, would have unavoidably funk into the love of the world, out of love to his child, he having had none before, and doting fo hugely on it; and therefore I took away this momentary life from the body of the child, that the foul of the father might live for ever. And for this laft fact, which you fo much abhor, it was the moft faithful piece of gratitude I could do to one that had ufed us fo humanely and kindly as that gentleman did. For this man, who by the appointment of his mafter was fo officious to us as to fhew us the way, intended this very night enfuing to let in a company of rogues into his mafter's houfe, to rob him of all that he had, if not to murder him and his family. And having faid thus, he vanifhed. But the poor Eremite, tranfported with joy and amazement, lift up his hands and eyes to heaven, and gave glory to God, who had thus unexpectedly delivered him from any farther anxiety touching the ways of his Providence; and thus returned with chearfulnefs to his forfaken cell, and fpent the refidue of his days there in piety and peace.

Notwithftanding

Notwithstanding the extreme scarcity of the *Gesta Romanorum*, this singular book has gone thro' various impressions.

Two copies of it were found in the numerous and splendid collection of the late Reverend and learned Thomas Crofts. See *Bibliotheca Croftiana*, London, 1783, pp. 67, 126.

1300 *Ex Gestis Romanor. bystorie notabiles, folio, nitidiss. in cortice*. EDIT. PRIMA. . . . *Sine Loco aut Nom. Impressoris*.

2487 *Ex Gestis Romanorum Hystorie notabiles collecte; de Viciis Virtutibusq. tractantes; cum Applicationibus moralisatis et mysticis. Literis Gothicis, 8vo. perg. Venet. per Alex de Bindonis mcccccx.*

We have also met with accounts of other Editions, viz.

*Gesta Romanorum, &c. finis Anno nostre salutis mccccxxxxix. Fo.*

*Gesta Romanorum, &c. Goud. per Gerardum Leeu mccccxc. Fo.*

Tyrwhitt in his account of "this strange book" makes mention of several editions; the first containing but 152 chapters, which were afterwards increased to 181, as in the Edition he had; printed at Rouen, 1521. It was among the earliest put to press; and, concluding from circumstances, he thinks "one of our countrymen was the Author." Chaucer owes many obligations to the *Gesta Romanorum*, and no less Gower, Lydgate, Occleve, and others, who manifestly borrowed many of their stories from it. There can be no doubt that it was of great use in compiling *the Floure of the Commaundements*; another book no less strange and uncommon. Dr. Farmer mentions also an old translation of the *Gesta Romanorum*, in English, printed by Wynkyn de Worde, where he found the story of the Caskets, &c. in the Merchant of Venice; a great variety of other incidents adopted by Shakspeare are likewise derived from the same source.

Dr. Henry More's Dialogues on the Attributes of God and his Providence, five in Number, from the 2d of which, the foregoing narrative of the Hermit in English is taken, were published under the name of Franciscus Palæopolitanus, An. 1668; an imperfect set of which is to be seen in Bishop Marsh's Library, St. Patrick's, Dublin.

It

It requires no extraordinary share of black letter information to discover, that our elder bards of the reformed type are not altogether so much beholden to the Greeks and Romans as has been fondly imagined. However they may have formed their plans or improved their diction on the classic models, their pages are highly illuminated with the treasures of Gothic lore; and the romances and legendary narratives of the olden times, have proved to them plentiful sources of interesting and sublime conceptions.\* Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy suggested to Milton the outline, and many of the most favourite images of his *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*; even the particular turn and measure of the verse he adopted from Burton; as Wharton has also remarked in his valuable edition of that great poet's juvenile productions. The Anatomy of Melancholy, though so little known to the generality of readers, is still a copious store-house of useful discoveries, information, and amusement to modern wits; for proof we need go no farther than Sterne. There is another obsolete folio, to which we may trace many striking sublimities of Milton; to mention but one; the poetical depth and immensity of the Infernal Regions, which the critics will have, a flight of competitorship with Homer and Virgil. This book has for its title, *The Polychronicon* . . . It was the work of Ranulph Higden, Monk of Bury, translated at the request of Lord Barclay. The first edition imprinted by Wynkyn de Worde, mccccxiii: The second, by Peter Treveris, mcccccxv, and the third, (a fair copy of which is preserved in Marsh's Library, St. Patrick's, Dublin) by the same Peter Treveris, imprinted at Southwerke, in the year of

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our

\* It may be proper to notice, though not strictly in its place, that, in the Catalogue of the College Library, the Book from which the HERMIT is taken, appears under the title of "*Recolectorium ex Gestis Romanorum de Vitiis et Virtutibus*, 8vo. Francof. 1508." . . . Ad ille, ad istam civitatem . . . in domo unus civis . . . quidam Pauper eis obviabat, &c. are the original reading.

our Lord God mcccc & xxvii, the xvi daye of Maye. Even Machiavel has been laid under contributions, and History degraded into a vehicle of fiction ; which, favourably speaking, is but a pitiful application of talents, and a palpable encroachment on the province of poetry.

The learned and judicious Zimmerman, who was himself a native of Swisserland, gives up the story of WILLIAM TELL, of which in his excellent Essay on Solitude, we find the following relation :

“ WILLIAM TELL was one of the principal authors of the revolution in Swisserland in the year 1307. GRISLER, who governed that country under the Emperor Albert, obliged him, on pain of death, to shoot from a considerable distance, with an arrow at an apple which was placed on the head of his infant son, and, it is said, that he had the good fortune to carry away the apple without doing the smallest injury to the child. The governor, on approaching to congratulate him on his dexterous achievement, perceived another arrow concealed under the garments of the successful archer ; and on inquiring of him for what use he intended it, “ I brought it,” replied TELL, “ for the purpose of revenge ; its eager point “ should have drank the blood of thy heart, inhuman Tyrant, “ if I had the misfortune to kill my son.” The story of the apple, however, which had before been told of a Goth soldier named TOCHO, is justly suspected by the later historians. The Swiss were willing to adorn the birthday of their liberty by the fable of some surprising event. But it is certain that TELL, after having suffered a long and rigorous confinement, killed the governor with an arrow, and gave by that means a signal to the conspirators.

In one of our old English ballads, as before hinted, the same or a similar achievement, abstracted from political consequences, is attributed to WYLLYAM of CLOUDESLE, a celebrated



celebrated archer of our own country; a country then and at all times remarkable for superior skill and dexterity in the use of the bow, which even at this day is a favourite exercise. Our ancient minstrels abound with stories of such extraordinary feats; and whoever is acquainted with legendary writ will have no difficulty in believing, that the splitting of a hazel rod at four hundred yards distance, and striking an apple off a child's head at six score, are perfectly in the style and taste of the times, and were but two arrows from the same quiver.

The superb Edition of the Works of HORATIO WALPOLE, Earl of Orford, in Five Volumes Royal Quarto, by the ROBINSONS, &c. London, this present year, (1798,) does honour to the spirit and industry of the publishers. In the 1st vol. appears the Tragedy of the Mysterious Mother, the offspring of that nobleman's pen, though not before publicly avowed, succeeded by a Postscript of considerable length, from which the following story of the Tragedy is extracted and given in the Author's own words, pp. 125, 6, which, contrasted with the subsequent accounts, taken from publications of more rare and difficult access, will doubtless afford a gratification to curiosity, and proportionally contribute to the pleasure of the perusal:

" I had heard, when very young, that a gentlewoman, under uncommon agonies of mind, had waited on Archbishop TILLOTSON, and besought his counsel. A damsel that had served her, had, many years before, acquainted her that she was importuned by the gentlewoman's son to grant him a private meeting. The Mother ordered the maiden to make the assignation, when she said she would discover herself, and reprimand him for his criminal passion; but, being hurried away by a much more criminal passion herself, she kept the assignation without discovering herself. The fruit of this  
horrid

horrid artifice was a daughter, whom the gentlewoman caused to be educated very privately in the country; but proving very lovely, and being accidentally met by her Father-brother, who never had the slightest suspicion of the truth, he had fallen in love with, and actually married her. The wretched guilty Mother learning what had happened, and distracted with the consequence of her crime, had now resorted to the Archbishop to know in what manner she should act. The prelate charged her never to let her son and daughter know what had passed, as they were innocent of any criminal intention. For herself, he bade her almost despair!

“Sometime after I had finished the play on this groundwork, a gentleman to whom I had communicated it, accidentally discovered the origin of the tradition in the novels of the Queen of Navarre, Vol. II. Novel 30; and to my surprise I found a strange concurrence of circumstances between the story as there related, and as I had adapted it to my piece: for, though I believed it to have happened in the reign of King William, I had, for a purpose to be mentioned hereafter, thrown it back to the eve of the Reformation; and the Queen, it appears, dates the event in the reign of Louis XI. I had chosen Narbonne for the scene,—the Queen places it in Languedoc. The rencontres are of little importance, and, perhaps, curious to nobody but the author.

“In order to make use of a canvas so shocking, it was necessary as much as possible to palliate the crime, and raise the character of the criminal. To attain the former end, I imagined the moment in which she has lost a beloved husband, when grief and disappointment, and a conflict of passions might be supposed to have thrown her reason off its guard, and exposed her to the danger under which she fell. Strange as the moment may seem for vice to have seized

seized on her, still it makes her less hateful than if she had coolly meditated so foul a crime. I have also endeavoured to make her very fondness for her husband in some measure the cause of her guilt." . . . So far our Rt. Hon. Dramatist.

In the pamphlet published by GEORGE FAULKNER, which was reprinted from a London Edition of the same year, 1751, an account of which is given in the 5th volume of the Monthly Review, p. 317, it is said that the narrative was intended for publication in the year 1685, and thus the writer introduces his extraordinary Tale:

"The following little history of the transactions of a private family, I should not have undertaken to offer to the public, but from the surprisingness of the facts, and my intimacy in the family, by whom the most minute passages were, in confidence, entrusted to my secrecy, from the very beginning to the ensuing catastrophe; of which I was but too late a spectator; as also from a particular inclination I have, that mankind beholding the dreadful consequences of vice in others, may form the stronger guards against any submission to it in themselves: For the ensuing narration will, to demonstration, prove, that no one can possibly limit the process of an ill act once commenced; and that the only way to avoid bad consequences is, to afford no cause for them; for one enormity, though ever so privately committed, fails not, for the most part, to draw after it such a succession of evils as is very difficult to set bounds to." . . . The whole narrative runs to the length of forty-eight octavo pages.

The author gives the story under fictitious names, because, he says, several of the descendants of the parties are settled near the scene of action, innocent of the facts.

Eugenio, who is described in all respects a finished gentleman, endowed with every personal and mental accomplishment, he says, was the younger son of an illustrious family in  
the

the northern parts of SCOTLAND. He was very early initiated into the army, where, at the age of twenty-eight, he ranked as a Captain, and falling in love with a young heiress of superior beauty and fortune, he paid his addresses to her, and a marriage was in a short time concluded. But he had but just time to behold his own image in a son she brought him, when he was commanded off, and fell at the siege of the fort of St. Martin's, in the Isle of Ree. The beautiful and disconsolate widow, Eleanora, as she is called, discharged every duty of an excellent mother to her son, named Orestes, and having liberally bestowed on him every advantage of previous institution, at a proper age he was sent to the University of GLASGOW.

Towards the latter end of the first year, at a time of vacation, he returned home on a visit to his Mother, who in his absence had taken into her family a gentleman's daughter, called Arene, as her companion. The young collegian grew enamoured with her beauty, and left no means untried to seduce her, and one night found means of getting into her bed-chamber, but without effecting his purpose, as happily she had time to conceal herself. The young lady disclosed the affair to her patroness, who highly approved and commended her conduct; but supposing, for very obvious reasons, under such circumstances, her son would deny the charge, and if wholly unnoticed would probably repeat his attempt, she bethought herself of a stratagem, wholly devoid of any evil intention on her part, to detect the young spark, and cure him of his pranks. "I myself," says she, "will this night take up with your bed, while you lie secure in mine: I'll ring such a peal in the amorous spark's ears, when I have him there, as shall deter him from any similar attempt in any family, I'll warrant you."

The young gentleman taking silence for a sort of consent, was thus encouraged to pursue his design, and far from the  
sneaking



sneaking attack which he had made the night before, rushed, *sans ceremonie*, at once into her bed. It was a fatal moment. The Mother, confounded with the untowardness of her situation, had not power to remonstrate, and, overcome by the youthful ardour that embraced her, fell a victim to his desires.

The dreadful consequences need not be repeated, though detailed more circumstantially in the pamphlet before us, they are sufficiently made known in the preceding relation; but surely the noble author of the tragedy, had no occasion to resort to so "strange a moment," as he has chosen, contrary to the narrative, for the perpetration of the horrid act; when the other, equally as critical, would as well have served his purpose, and would have been, if we dare apply the phrase, more natural.

The beautiful daughter of this incestuous intercourse, who was afterwards married to her own Father, is in the history named Cornelia, by whom he had several children, and being a Colonel in the infantry, at the Restoration, once more encountered Arene, his Mother's former ward, at an election ball in Pontefract, by which unfortunate meeting the denouement was casually brought about, which terminated as might be expected, tragically enough.

For the reader's farther instruction and amusement we will now turn to another scarce volume,

DUCTOR DUBITANTIUM, or the Rule of Conscience, &c.

The second edition, by Jeremy Taylor, Chaplain in Ordinary to King Charles the First, and late Bishop of Down and Connor, London, printed by Roger Norton, for Richard Boylston, &c. 1671, with a Dedication to the King, and a Preface, dated "From my study in Portmore, Kilultagh, October 5th, 1659." In which an extraordinary case of human frailty we find stated as follows. The scene of action, as appears by the context, in VENICE.

" 3. If

“ 3. If the error be invincible, and the consequent of the Perswasion be considered with the State of Grace, the error must be opened or not opened according to prudent considerations relating to the person and his state of affairs. So that the error must rather be suffered than a grievous scandal, or an intolerable, or a very great inconvenience. To this purpose COMITOLUS says it was determined by a congregation of learned and prudent persons, in answering to a strange and a rare case happening in VENICE; a gentleman did ignorantly lie with his Mother; she knew it but intended it not, 'till for her curiosity and in her search whether her son intended it to her maid, she was surpris'd and gotten with child: She perceiving her shame and sorrow hasten, sent her son to travel for many years; and he returned not till his Mother's female birth was grown to be a handsome pretty maiden. At his return he espies a sweet fac'd girl in the house, likes her, loves her, and intends to marry her. His Mother conjured him by all that was sacred and prophane that he should not, saying, she was a beggar's child, whom for pitie's sake she rescued from the street, and beggary, and that he should not by dishonouring his family, make her die with sorrow. The gentleman's affections were strong, and not to be mastered, and he married his own sister and daughter. But now the bitings of his Mother's conscience were intolerable, and to her confessor she discovered the whole business within a year or two after this prodigious marriage, and asked whether she was bound to reveal the case to her son and daughter, who now lived in love and sweetness of society innocently, though with secret misfortune which they felt not. It was concluded negatively; she was not to reveal it, lest she bring an intolerable misery in the place of that which to them was no sin, or at least upon notice of the error they might be tempted by their mutual endearment  
and

and common children, to cohabit in despite of the case, and so change that into a known sin, which before was unknown calamity; and by this state of the answer they were permitted to their innocence, and the children to their inheritance, and all under the protection of a harmless, though erring and mistaken conscience.

Book I. chap. iii. sect. iii. p. 89.

Comitolus and the Queen of Navarre are not forth coming, so for the present the particulars of their testimony must be dispensed with, and the German author, who as well as the Englishman, wot ye, speaks from his own knowlege, though formerly of our company, has absconded. The only material difference between his and the preceding account is, that the German vouches for the authenticity of his relation as of a matter of public notoriety at PRAGUE, in a family of his own particular acquaintance there. . . . Powers of Veracity! how long, by ignorance, knavery and sheer conceit, is the fond suffering world to be trifled with and imposed upon? . . . But to the eternal disgrace of the Illuminati, Philosophers, Politicians, and Reformers of the Eighteenth Century, this monstrous fabrication has been made the ground work of an atrocious calumny, meanly and industriously circulated in the common news papers, to blacken the character of the unfortunate Maria Antonietta of France! . . . And to the scandal of common honesty and common sense, all party business out of the question, there are some flaming . . . Virtuous Souls no doubt! . . . who affect to credit the horrid aspersions.

On our peep into Germany, casting an eye towards Prague, the name of their Poet BURGHER, and the tale of LEONORA occurred. It has been translated into English by four several hands. One of those writers, in the preface to his own version of that Popular Poem, expatiating on the peculiar

Y

character

character and taste of the Germans, says, " their minds vigorously conceive, and their language nobly expresses, the terrible and majestic; and it must be allowed that in this species of writing they would force from us the palm of excellence, were it not secured by the impregnable towers of OTRANTO. Of all their productions of this kind, LEONORA is perhaps the most perfect. The story in a narrow compass unites tragic event, poetical surprise, and epic regularity. The admonitions of the Mother are just, although ill-timed; the despair of the Daughter at once natural and criminal; her punishment dreadful and equitable. Few objections can be made to a subject new, simple and striking; and none to a moral, which cannot be too frequently and awfully enforced."

This is the common language of translators, in humble imitation of their great predecessor Dryden, obliquely recommending their own performances; and yet, admitting the translator spoke his real sentiments, concerning that popular and celebrated Production, his decision appears liable to many cogent exceptions. Without reference to Religious principles, considered in a moral light it will appear defective; to a philosophic eye absurd. The scope and tendency of it are of a mischievous nature. It may make the hair of the weak and credulous stand on end; the Infidel, who with rapture contemplates the wanton extravagancies of Jupiter, attends ancient cut-throats to the regions of Tartarus, and listens with avidity to the Legend of Proserpine, of which LEONORA's is a tolerable *Fac Simile*,\* feels shocked at the gloomy reveries of the Cloisters, and in his fancied triumphs over ignorance and superstition,

\* So Pluto seized of Proserpine, convey'd  
To Hell's tremendous gloom the affrighted maid;  
There grimly smil'd, pleas'd with his beauteous prize,  
Nor envy'd Jove his sunshine and his skies.

Addison's *Cato*, Act III. Scene 7th.

Vide Ovid. *Metamorph.* lib. 5. v. 391. De Proserp.



stitution, with his usual airs of self-sufficiency, will be tempted to treat the machinery of our modern with a sneer. In truth, the fiction is too violent; it out-herods Herod, and seems merely calculated to keep alive and propagate the exploded notions of ghosts and hobgoblins to the great annoyance of poor children, whose ductile minds are liable to fearful impressions, which by the strongest exertions of reason and good sense are scarcely ever afterwards to be wholly obliterated.

The argument in favour of the poem from the lesson of patience it is said to contain is by no means conclusive; for being wholly founded in imposture it necessarily loses of its effect. There are also objections to it as a composition arising from the conduct of the machinery itself. The terrible graces, to which the poem of *LEONORA* owes so much of its popularity, though bodied forth by the exquisite designs of the lady *DIANA BEAUCLERC*, in our humble apprehension, are not supported with a due degree of consistency. It is not easy to determine the precise characteristics, and prescribe limits for the conduct of Beings, with which no mortal has ever yet been personally in habits of familiarity; but according to the received ritual of Apparitions, the Ghost in question, is not only forced ungraciously into the service, but is made to assume powers to which, as a Ghost, he was utterly incompetent. If this position be tenable, we must beg leave to dissent from the authority. . . . The poem is not perfect.

The initiated in the mysteries of "that undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveller returns," of which Homer, Virgil and Shakspeare are the acknowledged Poetical High Priests, by no means admit such "fatal visions, sensible to feeling as to sight;" neither has the notion as yet prevailed among the superstitious and the vulgar. The author of *LEONORA*, by an inexcusable error, we may say, in the costume, has proceeded directly against the canon laws of their foundation,

for

for the sake, it should seem, of a moral not clearly deducible, and probably but a secondary consideration. Cause and effect should reciprocally correspond. Ghosts are serious subjects, and should not be roused from their everlasting mansions on trivial errands; to point out where a pot of money lies interred, or check the frenzy of a love-sick girl; but their imputed attributes are specifically essential and not to be dispensed with. Here the Ghost of a dead Warriour, armed cap-a-pee, in mail of the same temper, mounted on the Ghost of a dead Charger, makes a progress of five hundred German miles, and under the shape of an affianced lover, cajoles a fond credulous female, good and lawful flesh and blood, to quit her aged weeping mother and get up behind him: off he carries her, hurry-scurry, over hill, over dale, wood, waste, bog and briar, the same journey back again, all in the space of one short night, every now and then soothing and encouraging her to sit still, with an equivocal assurance, beneath the dignity of a Ghost, of accommodating her in his camp bed, six boards and a sheet, which in the upshot proves to be . . . his grave. And that is the poor creature's punishment for uttering a rash, a wicked expression if you will (exaggerated we may suppose) in the paroxysms of insanity, the effect of her fidelity and constancy; virtues which the men, though little they have to brag of, will seldom allow the sex, and surely this is a sad way of inculcating. Thus the order of nature is subverted; the secrets of the grave propounded, and a tremendous apparatus, as if the fate of nations depended on it, exhibited, for what? To frighten an innocent young maniac, and send her a little before her time to "Heaven:" But the pious and disconsolate Mother, without crime bereft of her child, the staff of her age, is the sufferer: and the Ghost not, as we are taught to believe, a mere visionary essence; but, contrary to all known principles of orthodoxy, a firm, corporeal, tangeable

tangible substance, vested with human powers, and retaining as in life the old spirit of gallantry with the usual accompaniments, prevarication and deceit.

The frigid criticism this may be deemed of a cold and phlegmatic heart. Not so; with deference to superiour understandings, it is the unbiassed opinion of an enemy to every species of affectation, and empty sentimentalism. It is the mature result of feeling and reflection, from an attentive consideration of the subject, and a thorough conviction of the bad effects such compositions are likely to produce. As a subject of poetical invention, it may be simple and striking; simplicity and force employed to a good purpose are capital recommendations, and the charm of novelty palliates many defects; but on looking attentively nearer home, strong proofs appear that, in this case at least, powerfully impugn the claims of the author of *LEONORA*, if not to the palm of excellence, indisputably to the honour of originality: and therefore more open to animadversion.

“Godfrey Augustus Burgher, [Bürger] was born An. 1748, at Afchersleben. In 1779, was made the first collection of his poems. They consist partly of songs, sonnets, elegies, fables, and other short pieces, comic and serious; and partly of ballads, many of which are translated with improvements from *English Originals*. Simplicity is the characteristic of his compositions; and of all literary beauties simplicity must be the most generally attractive. It is no common merit to excel in a style which all understand, many admire, and but few can attain. No writer perhaps has ever attained a more decided popularity.” The Poem of *LEONORA* is not given as a translation or an imitation; it is given peremptorily and without reserve as “an undoubted original, the most perfect in its kind.” The writer therefore hazards his own title to taste and discernment, who ventures to dispute it; and to contradict

contradict the assertion unauthorized and at random, would be an act of unpardonable presumption.

A Collection of Old Ballads, corrected from the best and most ancient copies extant, (the Third Edition) London, MDCCLXXVII, was published by J. Roberts, Warwick-lane, &c. which is quoted more than once by Dr. Percy, Bishop of Dromore, in his Reliques of Ancient English Poetry. The volume consists of 287 pages, containing forty-four favourite pieces; and if the reader's curiosity should prompt him to get the book, he will find our authority for the following Legend, [page 266] between which and LEONORA, there seems in many particulars so striking a resemblance, that considering the author's knowledge of English compositions, though in some circumstances the German may be perhaps an improvement, we can hardly suppose it to be an original.

XXXVIII. THE SUFFOLK MIRACLE: or, a Relation of a Young Man, who a month after his death appeared to his Sweetheart, and carry'd her on horseback behind him for forty miles in two hours, and was never seen after but in his grave.

A WONDER stranger ne'er was known  
Than what I now shall treat upon.  
In SUFFOLK there did lately dwell,  
A farmer rich, and known full well:

He had a daughter fair and bright,  
On whom he placed his whole delight;  
Her beauty was beyond compare,  
She was both virtuous and fair.

There was a young man living by,  
Who was so charmed with her eye,  
That he could never be at rest,  
He was by love so much possest.

He



He made address to her, and she,  
Did grant him love immediately;  
But when her father came to hear,  
He parted her, and her poor dear.

Forty miles distant was she sent,  
Unto his brother's, with intent  
That she should there so long remain,  
'Till she had changed her mind again.

Hereat this young man sadly griev'd,  
But knew not how to be reliev'd;  
He sigh'd and sob'd continually,  
That his true love he could not see.

She by no means could to him send,  
Who was her heart's espoused friend;  
He sigh'd, he griev'd, but all in vain,  
For she confin'd must still remain.

He mourn'd so much, that doctor's art,  
Could give no ease unto his heart,  
Who was so strangely terrify'd,  
That in short time for love he dy'd.

She that from him was sent away,  
Knew nothing of his dying-day,  
But constant still she did remain,  
And lov'd the dead, altho' in vain.

After he had in grave been laid  
A month or more, unto this maid  
He came in middle of the night,  
Who joy'd to see her heart's delight.

Her

Her father's horse, which well she knew,  
Her mother's hood and safe-guard too,  
He brought with him to testify,  
Her parent's order he come by.

Which when her uncle understood,  
He hop'd it would be for her good,  
And gave consent to her straightway,  
That with him she should come away.

When she was got her love behind,  
They pass'd as swift as any wind,  
That within two hours, or little more,  
He brought her to her father's door.

But as they did this great haste make,  
He did complain his head did ache;  
Her handkerchief she then took out,  
And ty'd the same his head about:

And unto him she thus did say,  
Thou art as cold as any clay;  
When we come home a fire we'll have;  
But little dream'd he went to grave.

Soon were they at her father's door  
And after she ne'er saw him more:  
I'll set the horse up, then he said,  
And there he left this harmless maid.

She knock'd, and strait a man he cry'd  
Who's there? 'Tis I, she then reply'd;  
Who wonder'd much her voice to hear,  
And was possess'd with dread and fear.

Her

Her father he did tell, and then  
He star'd like an affrighted man;  
Down stairs he ran, and when he see her,  
Cry'd out, my child, how cam'st thou here?

Pray, sir, did you not send for me,  
By such a messenger, said she;  
Which made his hair stare on his head,  
As knowing well that he was dead:

Where is he? then to her he said,  
He's in the stable, quoth the maid;  
Go in, said he, and go to bed,  
I'll see the horse well littered.

He star'd about, and there could he  
No shape of any mankind see;  
But found his horse all on a sweat,  
Which made him in a deadly fret.

His daughter he said nothing to,  
Nor none else, tho' full well they knew,  
That he was dead a month before,  
For fear of grieving her full sore.

Her father to the father went  
Of the deceas'd, with full intent  
To tell him what his daughter said;  
So both came back unto the maid.

They ask'd her, and she still did say,  
'Twas he that then brought her away;  
Which when they heard, they were amaz'd  
And on each other strangely gaz'd.

Z

A handkerchief



A handkerchief she said she ty'd  
About his head ; and that they try'd,  
The sexton they did speak unto,  
That he the grave would then undo :

Affrighted, then they did behold  
His body turning into mould,  
And though he had a month been dead,  
The handkerchief was about his head.

This thing unto her then they told,  
And the whole truth they did unfold ;  
She was thereat so terrified  
And grieved, that she quickly dyed.

Part not true love, you rich men then,  
But if they be right honest men  
Your daughters love, give them their way,  
For force oft breeds their lives' decay.

Notwithstanding all the high encomiums lavished on LEONORA, and the gorgeous attire in which she was presented to public notice, our SUFFOLK DAMSEL is not without her share of attractions. " Thoughtless of beauty, she is beauty's self." LEONORA, a beauty at second hand, and for the very graces in which she most excels, she is manifestly indebted to her rival; heightened with an additional tinge of rouge; in the opinion of those who have a true taste for the *simplex munditiis*, perhaps not to her advantage. In the article of diction there probably is no great disparity; the seeming negligence sometimes of the one, may arise from difference of time, and our familiarity with the language in which it is written; for the opposite reason, similar blemishes in the other cannot be equally apparent. The correspondence of sound and sense, for which the German has been distinguished,



guished, is, no doubt, a prime ornament of metre, and gives life and spirit to poetic expression; but carried to an extreme, however striking the resemblance, it is the resemblance in caricature, and ceases to be beautiful. The genuine unaffected simplicity of our old English Ballad, depending not on the play of words, but on the conception, would bear translation, and appear with advantage in any language, "where free to follow nature is the mode;" this is not the case with the German. The reiteration of *trap, trap, trap* for the sound of a horse's, or rather the ghost of a horse's feet, and of *cling, cling, cling* for that of a door-bell, in Burgher's Poem, is mere mimicry, adapted to the vulgar ear; which in an English version, the translator himself confesses, would appear ridiculous. Such mimic artifice, however the English Bard, introducing a real horse, more naturally might have indulged, and yet judiciously has avoided. In the moral too, if the interposition of preternatural agency can be at all admitted, he has a manifest superiority. The Suffolk Maiden, it is true, falls a sacrifice; but it is an unblemished, heroic sacrifice to virtuous constancy: and in her loss the parents receive the due punishment of their avarice and hard-heartedness, as a warning to parents in general, not to sacrifice their children's real happiness, as is but too often the case, to venal and selfish ends. . . . Burgher, indeed, has had ample justice done him by his own countrymen, and, singing to the tune of "Over the hills and far away," has among us the recommendation of a foreigner; that was enough to gain him the palm of excellence, now embalmed for the admiration of future ages in the broad foliage of a royal quarto, and it is but justice to add, the charming pencil of a fair and noble lady, the happiest efforts of the engraver's skill, combined with the exertions of the typographer, render it a curiosity of art, and enhance its merit in the eye of the connoisseur. Our old Suffolk Minstrel "warbling his native wood notes wild,"

wild," remains nameless and unnoticed. What an encouraging contrast! 'tis a true epitome of the History and Spirit of these wonderful times: and tho' his Ghost, after a requiem of near one hundred years, again revisits the glimpses of the moon, to assert his ravished honours, no man knows, or possibly cares, on whose temples to bind the palm of originality . . . "Rest, rest, perturbed spirit!" The same subject, diversified with occasional touches from Shakspeare, has contributed to enrich the canvas of some of our latter novelists.

This preternatural expedition also seems anticipated in Scarron's comical Romance [pt. I, ch. 24,] from which the German, as well as our English Legendist, might have taken the hint and collected materials. Destiny is the name of the French writer's hero, the lady of the piece is distinguished by the appellation of Angelica: . . . . .

'Twas midnight when Destiny in pursuit of Angelica, thinking to make a short cut, struck into a little miry narrow lane. He had not advanced many paces, when the Moon, which shone forth in full splendour, shrunk suddenly under a cloud, and the thick overshadowing boughs, rustling on each side of the way, added not a little to its gloom and perplexity; his steed, having all these impediments to encounter, could by no means be prevailed on to second the ardour of his wishes. In the midst of his embarrassment, inwardly execrating his situation, suddenly, to his infinite amazement, he perceived something, like a man or a devil, leap up behind him, and clasp him about the neck. Destiny was immeasurably alarmed, and his horse so much startled, that he would certainly have thrown his rider, had not the phantom, which invested him, kept him firm in the saddle. The horse, taking fright, ran away with him; and Destiny, not knowing what he was about, continued goring him with his spurs, terrified with two naked arms about his neck, and  
close

close at his cheek a cold face, breathing time to the cadence of his courser's gallop. The race continued long without intermission; for the lane proved not a short one: at length, at the entrance of a wild heath, the horse began to abate of his impetuosity, and Destiny, recovering breath, gained a little respite to his agony; for custom familiarizes every thing. The Moon broke from under the cloud, and darting her mild lustre directly upon him, discovered, to the astonished cavalier, an enormous figure of a man stark naked at his shoulder, with a horrid countenance, grinning in his face. This was no time for curiosity, he had no desire to ask questions, but clapping spurs to his horse, urged him on at full speed, till the animal, quite jaded, began to breathe short and thick. In an instant, wholly unexpected, the strange companion flipt from behind him to the ground, and fell a laughing. Destiny nevertheless pressed forward, and turning his head about, saw the phantom making off with great rapidity towards the place whence he came. This Destiny afterwards discovered to be . . . a poor wandering Madman in one of his nocturnal excursions from the adjacent village.

Whoever has read those amusing tales, called the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, and recollects the fifth voyage of Sinbad the Sailor, may possibly recognize in Scarron's Madman strong features of that wonderful adventurer's OLD MAN OF THE SEA, which, from the custom of oriental moralists and other local considerations, supposing the fiction not destitute of foundation in reality, answers very nearly to the description modern voyagers and naturalists give of the OURAN-OUTANG, the ostensible link between the human and mere animal species. This also induces a warrantable and fair conclusion, that, as the Europeans were never scrupulous in seizing, and converting to their own purposes, the gems and trophies of the East, the Suffolk Damsel, the Madman of

Scarron,

Scarron, and the Leonora of Burgher, are all but branches of the same family of Indian extraction.

The Arabian and French writer, as to the Fable, have both evidently the advantage of the German; for they have nature and probability on their side. Sinbad's and Destiny's adventures combine the terrible graces which arrest the attention of the Reader in the tale of Leonora, and keep the mind in no less a degree of agitation and suspense to the end. And the novelty of the surprise, which could neither be foreseen nor expected, in the denouement, gives it a seasonable relief, abstracted from the danger of false impressions justly to be apprehended from the other; for which no moral founded in imposture can make amends. On a comparative view, a reader of no very flippant conception, by a risible association of ideas, might easily convert the preternatural machinery of the German story into burlesque; for the relief of many an ingenuous and timid mind on all such extravagant suppositions, however popular, "a consummation devoutly to be wished."

THE END.

DUBLIN,

Sept. 17, 1798.



## O M I S S I O N S.

THE Theory of ANIMAL MAGNETISM, a recent Imposture, which has given occasion to a variety of Philosophic Investigation, and furnished matter for a very laughable Farce, has its origin in the natural history of the Torpedo and Electrical Eel.\* It was a matter of speculation set afloat by a cunning French Philosopher of the medical tribe, in pursuit of notoriety, which he contrived to render subservient to the purposes of his vanity and his purse, giving it something of oracular éclat, by a dexterous combination of the descriptions left by Virgil, Ovid, Lucan, and others, of certain Priestesses, whose prophetic throes and hysteric affections in cases of consultation are admirably exemplified and illustrated by the magnetized damsels and matrons of the present æra. For the sex, among the ancients as well as moderns, have, by the artful and designing, been generally found convenient instruments as well as dupes of imposition; even within the narrow sphere of our own observation, there are not wanting females of curiosity and enterprize, who, in the rage for Animal Magnetism, started forth candidates, and having gone through the previous gradations, awakened from their delirium, to speak in the language of the adepts, surprised with the luminous Crisis. Giraldus commonly called Cambrensis, a native of Wales and Bishop of St. David's, in his Itinerary published towards the close of the 12th century, gives a picture of the extacies of certain Welsh enthusiasts, so nearly resembling the phenomena attending Animal Magnetism, that the one, with some trifling verbal modifications, seems merely a copy of the other under a different designation. Those who are yet strangers to this species of illusion will find an abstract of the passage from Giraldus Cambrensis, in

\* For a very full and clear account of the Torpedo and Electrical Eel, see Cavallo on Electricity.

in Warrington's History of Wales, 4to, London, 1782, 2d Edition, pp. 102, 3.

"There were amongst the Welsh certain persons whom they called *Arwenydbion*, a word expressive of poetical raptures. These persons, when consulted about any thing doubtful, inflamed with a high degree of enthusiasm, were to all appearance carried out of themselves, and seemed as if they were possessed by an invisible spirit; yet they did not declare a solution of the difficulty required, but by the power of wild and inconsistent circumlocution, in which they abounded, any person who observed the answer would at length, by some turn or digression in the speech, receive, or fancy they did, an explanation of what was sought. From this state of extacy they were at last roused as from a deep sleep, and were compelled, as it were, by the violence of others, to return to their natural state. Another thing, it is said, was peculiar to these persons; that when they recovered their reason they did not recollect any of those things which in their extacy they had uttered. And if it happened that they were again consulted about the same or any other thing, they would be certain to express themselves in other and far different words. This property was bestowed upon them, as they fancied, in their sleep; at which time, according to Giraldus, it appeared to some of them as if new milk or honey was poured into their mouths; to others, as if a written scroll had been put into their mouths; and on their awaking, they publicly professed that they had been endowed with these extraordinary gifts. This imaginary spirit of divination, has been also in much usage in the Highlands of Scotland, and is there known under the expressive term of SECOND SIGHT."

MASQUERADES, which are by most people imagined peculiar to the moderns, and exclusively confined to Europe, were

were in request among the Israelites; and, let not the minds of the pious and well-disposed revolt at the assertion, mention is made of them in the Scriptures; not, you may be satisfied, in the way of encouraging them, but wholly in reprobation of the folly and indiscretion of indulging a propensity to amusements of their seductive and immoral influence.

Dramatic Writers do not plume themselves on a strict adherence to genuine history; what is called poetic probability is all they look to, and in a general way, little more is required: Their business is to delineate character, and diversify their scenes, so as to interest and affect their auditors; not to establish facts. On this principle, the liberties Dryden has taken in his tragedy of *Don Sebastian*, are agreeable to usage, and stand so far excused. The prose writer who relates a story, is bound by a severer law, and as an historian, should confine himself to the truth. The accurate and judicious pen of Mr. Addison, has been misguided, by a sprightly French writer, it seems, in relation to Muley Moluc, a principal character of that play. [*Spectator*, vol. v. No. 349.] As the story is happily calculated to amuse, as well as instruct, the chief object we have had in view throughout these pages, our Readers will perhaps be pleased to see the account of the African Monarch, as Mr. Addison gives it, contrasted with what we have reason to believe the true history of the same event.

“ I shall conclude this paper with the instance of a person who seems to me to have shewn more intrepidity and greatness of soul in his dying moments, than what we meet with among any of the most celebrated Greeks and Romans. I met with this instance in the History of the Revolutions in Portugal, written by the Abbot de Vertot.

When Don Sebastian, King of Portugal, had invaded the territories of Muli Moluc, Emperor of Morocco, in order to

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dethrone

dethrone him, and set the crown upon the head of his nephew, Moluc was wearing away with a distemper which he himself knew was incurable. However, he prepared for the reception of so formidable an enemy. He was indeed so far spent with his sickness, that he did not expect to live out the whole day, when the last decisive battle was given; but knowing the fatal consequences that would happen to his children and people, in case he should die before he put an end to that war, he commanded his principal officers that, if he died during the engagement, they should conceal his death from the army, and that they should ride up to the litter in which his corpse was carried, under pretence of receiving orders from him as usual. Before the battle began, he was carried through all the ranks of his army in an open litter, as they stood drawn up in array, encouraging them to fight valiantly, in defence of their religion and country. Finding afterwards the battle to go against him, though he was very near his last agonies, he threw himself out of his litter, rallied his army, and led them on to the charge; which afterwards ended in a complete victory on the side of the Moors. He had no sooner brought his men to the engagement, but, finding himself utterly spent, he was again replaced in his litter, where laying his finger on his mouth, to enjoin secrecy to his officers, who stood about him, he died a few moments after in that posture."

The following relation is extracted from an account of a Journey to Mequinez, the residence of the present Emperor of Morocco, on the occasion of Commodore Stewart's embassy thither, for the redemption of the British captives in the year 1721, by John Windus; London, printed by Jacob Tonson, 1728. The Author in his preface, speaking of his work, says: "As I had the honour to attend Mr. Stewart into the Emperor of Morocco's dominions, I continued in those



those parts, between three and four months, which time I employed in gathering such materials as encouraged me to proceed in the following work: and in this I have been particularly careful, not to deliver any thing, but what either came under my own observation, or was supported by authorities not to be doubted of," &c. &c. This writer's account of the battle of Don Sebastian, [pp. 73, 4, 5, 6.] runs thus: "The 18th [June] we decamped between five and six in the morning, and passed the river *Elmabassen*, famous for the battle fought between Don Sebastian King of Portugal, and the Moors; as this story had given matter to Sir Richard Steele,\* to furnish the world with a paper of the heroical virtue of Muley Moluc, then king of Morocco, it gave me the curiosity to enquire, whether they had any historical account thereof; but found only a traditional story, which most of them agreed in, differing much from Sir Richard Steele, who gives the praise of heroick virtue to the Moorish king, whereas the story of the country attributes it to a slave; for Muley Moluc was a prince very much beloved by his people, but infirm, and at the time he left Morocco, to defend his country against Don Sebastian, was so ill, that he was forced to be carried in a litter, and when he came to Alcaffar, (about six miles from the place where the battle was fought) he there died; upon which a slave of his called Mirwan, (whose name

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\* Sir Richard Steele, the conductor and ostensible Author of the *Spectator*. It is now universally known Sir Richard was not the sole writer of that elegant and useful periodical paper. It was the joint production of several hands, the most eminent wits of the time, whose papers are respectively distinguished by certain private signatures agreed on for the purpose. Mr. Addison was a liberal contributor to that work, as well as the *Tatler* and *Guardian*. His signature was one of the letters in the word CLIO, and by the particular letter of that word occasionally affixed, not only the writer, but his particular place of residence at the time, is pointed out. Thus the paper alluded to, must be ascribed not to Sir R. Steele, but to his friend and coadjutor Mr. Addison, then residing at his house in London, as we are taught to understand by the signature L.

the Moors, to this day, mention with great regard, because of the gallantry and service of the action) wisely considering the consequence of keeping secret the death of a prince so well beloved by his people, at a time when the two armies every day expected to join battle, contrived it so, as to give out orders for the king, as if he had been alive, making believe he was better than he used to be, till the battle was over; when the said slave (thinking he merited a better reward than what he met with) wished the Successor joy, both of the victory and empire; but the ungrateful Prince caused him to be immediately put to death, saying, he had robbed him of the glory of the action. The Portuguese who were dispersed in the battle, would not believe that their king was slain, but ran up and down the country, crying out, *Onde esta el Rey* (i. e.) *Where is the King?* the Moors often hearing the word *Rey*, which in Arabick signifies *Good sense*; told them, that if they had any *Rey*, they had never come thither.

Many of the ordinary people in Portugal will not persuade themselves, that Don Sebastian is yet dead: And there is now to be read on a monument in the great church of Bellem, near Lisbon, the following inscription:

*Hoc jacet in tumulo, si fama est vera, Sebaſtes."*

Mr. Boswell observes, and his observation is just, that it is the indispensable duty of every writer to be exact in his quotations. The distorted, mutilated, and spurious authorities disingenuously palmed upon their readers by Voltaire, Hume, Gibbon, and their disciples, to serve their insidious purposes, would fill volumes, and have been abundantly exposed. Writers of a very different cast, without any premeditated intention to deceive, have fallen into great inaccuracies in this respect, which should be an admonition to readers of all descriptions, not to pin their faith on authorities at second hand, when they can resort to the originals.

The

The Spectator, [vol. vi. No. 438] in his animadversions on a passionate disposition has the following passage:\*

"If you would see passion in its purity, without mixture of reason, behold it represented in a mad Hero, drawn by a mad Poet. Nat Lee, makes his Alexander say thus:

"Away, begone, and give a whirlwind room,  
 "Or I will blow you up like dust! avaunt;  
 "Madness but meanly represents my toil.  
 "Eternal discord!  
 "Fury! revenge! disdain and indignation!  
 "Tear my swollen breast, make way for fire and tempest.  
 "My brain is burst, debate and reason quench'd;  
 "The storm is up, and my hot bleeding heart  
 "Splits with the rack, while passions like the wind,  
 "Rise up to heaven, and put out all the stars."

Every passionate fellow in town talks half the day with as little consistency, and threatens things as much out of his power." The whole paper well deserves to be read; but there is not one word of the rant there cited, in the part of Alexander: It belongs to quite another personage, and is besides incorrectly given. In the third act of the *Rival Queens*, where Roxana, Cassander, and Polipercon are the interlocutors, it is Roxana, chafed by those odious archtraitors, who thus exhibits the picture of female fury:

Away, begone, and give a whirlwind room,  
 Or I will blow you up like dust; avaunt:  
 Madness but meanly represents my toil.  
*Roxana* and *Statira*, they are names  
 That must for ever jar; eternal discord,  
 Fury, revenge, disdain and indignation  
 Tear my swell'n breast, make way for fire and tempest.  
 My brain is burst, debate and reason quench'd,

The

\* This paper has the signature T. ascribed to Sir Richard Steele.

The storm is up, and my hot-bleeding heart  
Splits with the rack, while passions like the winds  
Rise up to heaven, and put out all the stars.  
What saving hand, O what almighty arm  
Can raise me sinking ?

Rival Queens, 4to. 5th Edit. London 1704.

Bell in his edition [Edinburgh printed by the Martins 1782.] has given the angry Queen three lines modeled upon these, in a less extravagant strain; the rest are wholly omitted.

We have an instance of a similar mistake in the third volume of the Spectator, No. 241, the subject is the Absence of lovers. \* The passage in view runs thus:

“ ABSENCE is what the poets call death in love, and has given occasion to abundance of beautiful complaints in those authors who have treated of this passion in verse. OVID’s Epistles are full of them. Otway’s Monimia talks very tenderly upon this subject.”

————— “ It was not kind  
“ To leave me like a turtle, here alone,  
“ To droop and mourn the absence of my mate.  
“ When thou art from me every place seems desert,  
“ And I, methinks, am savage and forlorn.  
“ Thy presence only ’tis can make me blest,  
“ Heal my unquiet mind and tune my soul.”

Orphan, Act II. Scene the last.

It is not Monimia, but Castalio that talks thus tenderly :

*Cast.* Monimia, my angel ! ’twas not kind  
To leave me like a turtle here alone,  
To droop and mourn the absence of my mate.  
When thou art from me every place is desert, &c.

*Mon.* Oh! the bewitching tongues of faithless men!  
’Tis thus the false hyæna, &c.

Mr.

\* The paper is distinguished with a C. which is one of the letters used by Mr. Addison, implying that it was written at Chelsea.



Mr. Sheridan, who, one should think, could not be mistaken in a quotation from a play, in which he had performed times without number, and on whose authority one might be tempted to lay a wager, gives us the following passage in his *Lectures on Elocution*. [Lect. IV. on Emphasis.]\*

“ By means of Emphasis what passes in the mind is often shewn in a few words, which otherwise would require great circumlocution. Of which take the following instance from the Play of *All for Love*:

————— “ The fault was mine

“ To place thee there, where only, thou, couldst fail.”

“ In this scene Anthony, having found out that his friend Dolabella, whom he had employed on a commission to Cleopatra, instead of discharging the trust reposed in him, had suffered his own passion for that dangerous beauty so far to prevail, as to give up his friend’s cause, and urge his own love-suit to her; at first upbraids Dolabella in the bitterest terms for his treachery. But afterwards when he cools,” &c.

Again in the succeeding Lecture [Lect. V. on Pauses and Stops.]\* He quotes the same line with a second comment upon it, thus . . . . “ And had they placed three commas in the line quoted from *All for Love*, as thus:

To place thee there, where only, thou, couldst fail. —  
The full import would have been at once perceived.”

These Lectures were several times delivered by himself to audiences consisting of four or five hundred at a time, and went through different editions: The first in quarto, and afterwards in octavo, corrected by himself, and no error was ever in the least suspected. On my undertaking the first Dublin edition, I turned to the play of *All for Love*; no such passage was to be found in it; I consulted Shakspeare’s

Anthony

\* Quarto edit. London, 1762, pp. 67, 8, and p. 81. Octavo edit. London, 1787, pp. 84, 5, and p. 102. It were to be wished these were the only errors that disgrace a spurious edition of Mr. Sheridan’s Lectures printed in Dublin.

Anthony and Cleopatra, which was the original, Dryden's being but an alteration from Shakspeare, and was equally unsuccessful: I mentioned the circumstance to Mr. Sheridan; he laughed at my assertion, and insisted I had overlooked it; for it was impossible he could have committed such a blunder. There it rested; but one evening sitting at Young's tragedy of the Revenge, it was the last time poor unfortunate Mossop performed Zanga, I was surpris'd to hear the passage in dispute addressed by Carlos to his friend Alonzo, not in a scene of reproach, but emulous generosity, respecting Leonora, thus:

————— The crime was mine,

Who plac'd thee there, where only thou could'st fail, &c.

Revenge, Act II.

If such consummate masters, whom no man can suspect of an intention to mislead, are not exempt from errors, which in themselves, it must be admitted, are of no great consequence, should we not be upon our guard in more important matters, and never trust implicitly to quotations, even though Tom Paine himself should stake his reputation on their fidelity? It may also afford a hint to our testy disputants, male and female, not rashly to form conclusions, or trip up their modest opponents with borrowed authorities. Pope, who, maugre all the strictures of fastidious critics, is one of the best and most instructive poetic writers in any language, reprobates, with just severity, the self-sufficiency of tenacious wranglers, and at the same time prescribes a golden rule of conduct which all may reduce to practice with advantage:

Be silent always, when you doubt your sense;  
And speak, though sure, with seeming diffidence:  
Some positive, persisting Fops we know,  
Who if once wrong, will needs be always so;  
But you, with pleasure own your errors past,  
And make each day a Critique on the last.

Though

Though no reader of feeling and taste can deny the Author of the Seasons the due praise of being, on suitable occasions, eminently pathetic, yet the affecting Episode of Celadon and Amelia has a recommendation which renders it peculiarly interesting. It is founded in truth.\* The circumstances which a few years before unhappily occurred, though somewhat disguised perhaps to conceal the obligation, are taken from Gay. Both were poets; but Gay has given the melancholy account of John Hewit and Sarah Drew, which is manifestly the original, in prose; and, as a matter of taste, it would be hard to determine which has the advantage. It is easy to perceive that Gay wrote from immediate impressions, and in his relation of that awful event he has left one of the finest examples of the epistolary style of writing in its kind that is to be met with in our language. Neither of those writers can lose much; the reader must be a gainer, by comparing them.

FROM MR. GAY TO MR. F——.

STANTON-HARCOURT, AUG. 9, 1718.

THE only news you can expect to have from me here, is news from Heaven, for I am quite out of the world, and there is scarce any thing can reach me except the noise of thunder, which undoubtedly you have heard too. We have read in old authors, of high towers levelled by it to the ground, while the humble vallies have escaped: The only thing that is proof against it is the laurel, which however I take to be no great security to the brains of modern authors. But to let you see that the contrary to this often happens, I must acquaint you that the highest and most extravagant heap of towers in the universe, which is in this neighbourhood, stands still undefaced, while a cock of barley in our next field has been consumed to ashes. Would

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to

\* Thomson's Summer, l. 1171; published in 1727, nine years after the Narrative of Gay.

to God that this heap of barley had been all that had perished! For unhappily beneath this little shelter sat two much more constant lovers than ever were found in romance under the shade of a beech-tree. John Hewit was a well-set man of about five-and-twenty; Sarah Drew might be rather called comely than beautiful, and was about the same age: They had passed thro' the various labours of the year together with the greatest satisfaction; if she milked, 'twas his morning and evening care to bring the cows to her hand. It was but last fair that he bought her a present of green silk for her straw hat; and the poesy on her silver ring was of his chusing. Their love was the talk of the whole neighbourhood; for scandal never affirmed that they had any other views than the lawful possession of each other in marriage. It was that very morning that he had obtained the consent of her parents, and it was but 'till the next week that they were to wait to be happy. Perhaps in the intervals of their work they were now talking of their wedding-cloaths, and John was suiting several sorts of poppies and field-flowers to her complexion, to chuse her a knot for the wedding-day. While they were thus busied (it was on the last of July between two and three in the afternoon) the clouds grew black, and such a storm of lightning and thunder ensued, that all the labourers made the best of their way to what shelter the trees and hedges afforded. Sarah was frightened, and fell down in a swoon on a heap of barley. John, who never separated from her, sat down by her side, having raked together two or three heaps, the better to secure her from the storm. Immediately there was heard so loud a crack, as if Heaven had split asunder; every one was solicitous for the safety of his neighbour, and called to one another throughout the field. No answer being returned to those who called to our lovers, they stepped to the place where they lay; they perceived the  
barley



barley all in a smoke, and then 'spyed this faithful pair, John with one arm about Sarah's neck, and the other held over her, as to screen her from the lightning. They were both struck in this tender posture. Sarah's left eyebrow was singed, and there appeared a black spot on her breast; her lover was all over black, but not the least signs of life were found in either. Attended by their melancholy companions, they were conveyed to the town, and the next day interred in Stanton-Harcourt church-yard. My lord Harcourt, at Mr. Pope's and my request, has caused a stone to be placed over them, upon condition that we should furnish the epitaph, which is as follows :

When Eastern lovers feed the funeral fire,  
On the same pile the faithful pair expire;  
Here pitying heaven that virtue mutual found,  
And blasted both that it might neither wound.  
Hearts so sincere th' Almighty saw well pleas'd,  
Sent his own lightning, and the victims seiz'd.

But my lord is apprehensive the country people will not understand this; and Mr. Pope says he'll make one with something of Scripture in it, and with as little poetry as Hopkins and Sternhold.

Yours, &c.

JOHN GAY.

Those who are desirous of seeing on what narrow foundations a genius for the Drama can build a Tragedy, will do well to consult the Guardian. The first volume of that work, No. 37, contains the relation of a scene of misfortunes which really happened some years ago in Spain. Short as the account is, it supplied Dr. Young with materials for his Tragedy of the Revenge; in which we may fairly presume he had Othello in view, and aspired to break a lance with Shakspeare.

“ Don

“ Don Alonzo, a Spanish nobleman, had a beautiful and virtuous wife, with whom he had lived for some years in great tranquillity. The gentleman, however, was not free from the faults usually imputed to his nation; he was proud, suspicious, and impetuous. He kept a Moor in his house, whom, on a complaint from his Lady, he had punished for a small offence with the utmost severity. The Slave vowed revenge, and communicated his resolution to one of the Lady's women, with whom he lived in a criminal way. This creature also hated her mistress, for she feared she was observed by her; she therefore undertook to make Don Alonzo jealous, by insinuating that the gardener was often admitted to his Lady in private, and promising to make him an eye-witness of it. At a proper time agreed on between her and the Morisco, she sent a message to the gardener, that his Lady, having some hasty orders to give him, would have him come that moment to her in her chamber. In the mean time she had placed Alonzo privately in an outer room, that he might observe who passed that way. It was not long before he saw the gardener appear. Alonzo had not patience; but, following him into the apartment, struck him at one blow with a dagger to the heart; then dragging his Lady by the hair, without enquiring farther, he instantly killed her.

Here he paused, looking on the dead bodies with all the agitations of a daemon of revenge; when the wench who had occasioned these terrors, distracted with remorse, threw herself at his feet, and in a voice of lamentation, without sense of the consequence, repeated all her guilt. Alonzo was overwhelmed with all the violent passions at one instant, and uttered the broken voices and motions of each of them for a moment, until at last he recollected himself enough to end his agony of love, anger, disdain, revenge, and remorse, by murdering the Maid, the Moor, and himself.”



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## THE MERCHANT'S TALE.\*

"AN affair having occurred in the box-room of the theatre royal, on Monday evening last, in consequence of an unprovoked attack on my person; and a malicious misrepresentation of that affair having appeared in some public papers, I feel myself impelled, however reluctantly, to trespass on the public attention, by a simple narrative of facts.—I am equally stimulated to this by what I conceive a proper respect for the rank of a citizen, which, in a political point of view, I do not consider the object of insult from any profession, however distinguished by the King's commission, supported by the people for their PROTECTION, and not for their DESTRUCTION.

"On Monday, the 21st of December, I went with two friends to the box-room of the theatre-royal, and paid for my admission; we were shown by the box-keeper, into a box, in which were three gentlemen, two of them in regimentals, and three ladies. One of the gentlemen told us, the box was engaged to him and his party, to which he was politely answered, that, the moment his company came, we would withdraw, with which he appeared satisfied.—Soon after came a third officer, and one of the other gentlemen went out. After sitting some time, the last mentioned officer went out; and after the play, my two friends also retired to another part of the theatre. The officer soon after returned, and sat himself down by me in a manner so abrupt as to push me backward off the seat, which I conceived to be an accident, and therefore did not resent it, tho' the rudeness of the gentleman astonished me much, as he did not offer any apology. My two friends returned before the farce began. On entering the box, by accident, the flap of the seat fell against the officer, for which an immediate apology was offered; which, the officer not regarding, thought proper to say, we were troublesome, and that he did not know what business we had there—sharp words ensued—the dispute however subsided, and civility seemed to be perfectly restored.

"A few minutes before the farce ended, the officer who had been so very rude went out:—my friends and I, when the amusement concluded, were retiring peaceably through the

G

box-

\* By way of Introduction - . . . taken from the Morning Paper.

box-room.—We there saw six or seven officers standing together;—one of them, pointing to me, said, ‘That is he;’—upon which the officer who had distinguished himself by his rudeness in the box, seized me by the collar, and, with the most abusive language, threatened to break my bones. One of my friends remonstrated on the impropriety of such expressions, and offered to give him my address, which the other rejected with more scurrility of language, and then pushed the pommel of his sword with great violence in my eye. A scuffle ensued, and I made the best defence I was able with a stick which I fortunately happened to have in my hand. The other officers joined in the attack, threatening instant death, which I have every reason to apprehend would have been the consequence, (FOR THEY DREW THEIR SWORDS) had it not been for the interference of some gentlemen present, whose intrepidity broke into the circle in which they had me encompassed, and prevented any fatality which might have been intended.

“I have been most unmeritedly traduced, and expressions alledged to have been applied by me to the ladies in the box, (of which I trust I am incapable) which would have disgraced the meanest of mankind; and which, if really used, must have drawn forth the instant resentment of the two officers, under whose immediate protection those ladies were—but these gentlemen thought proper not only to sit silent during the altercation in the box, but to take no part in the affray which ensued.

“Of the foregoing facts I have numerous respectable witnesses, many of whom were before total strangers to me.—I am not disposed to enter into newspaper contests, or abusive recrimination.—This is the first and last time I shall take notice of any anonymous publications; having resorted to the laws of the country, from which, though a stranger (being a citizen of London) I have full confidence in meeting redress. I am also, proud to say, that I am now a citizen of the metropolis of Ireland, and I trust never to be found shrinking from the duties I owe to that character; and I feel that I should wrong the justice of my cause, if I had not an honest confidence in the candour, impartiality, and support of my fellow citizens.

No. 129, Abbey-street,  
Dec. 26, 1789.

“MICHAEL WORTH.”



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RECREANT KNIGHTS DISCOMFITED,

AN HEROI-SERIO-COMIC BALLAD,  
CONTAINING A FAITHFUL RELATION OF A STRANGE AND  
TERRIBLE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN NINE GREAT  
OFFICERS AND A PEACEFUL CITIZEN.\*

..... *Nimium ne crede colori.* Virg. Ecl. 2.

GOD prosper long our noble King,  
Our lives and safeties all!  
A woful skirmish late there did  
In SPRANGER'S Booth befall.<sup>1</sup>

No longer be it sung or said,  
Nine taylors make a man,  
Since nine 'spruce Cavaliers in red  
From one small Merchant ran.

A fray so strangely ne'er begun  
At opera, play or park,  
From Alexander, Philip's son,<sup>2</sup>  
To Alexander Clarke.

The

The practice of the Mefs gone through,  
And Faulkner's Journal read;  
What could our vacant Heroes do,  
Until the time of bed?

To lounge the tedious hours they went  
At HEXHAM's mimic fight;<sup>3</sup>  
But dearly shall they all repent  
The pastime of that night.

Alert they to the boxes crowd,  
Of gaudy trappings vain,  
And look, full crusty, glum and proud,  
On little folks disdain.

They gabble loud, damn all they saw,  
And all the house disturb;  
For 'gainst ill-breeding there's no law,  
And on their tongues no curb.

A Youth beside them took his place,  
Of small account to see,  
And, sooth to say, 'twas great disgrace,  
He should so near them be.

Him first in guarded speech they taunt,  
Which courteous he repell'd;  
Thence gathering heart they huff and vaunt,  
By him with smiles beheld.

For

For prowess high in PLYMOUTH streets  
Recorded stands their fame,  
And eke their thrice renowned feats,  
DEE's frighted shores proclaim.<sup>4</sup>

Nor shall thy meed in OSTMEN'S-TOWN,<sup>5</sup>  
SLIEVE-BRAZEN, be forgot,  
When GEORGE, the hatter, knock'd thee down;  
CORK-HILL, the fatal spot.

Prefuming like a lordly brave,  
Thou didst thy venom spit;  
But that could not thy bacon save,  
Which might have taught thee wit.

FITZMINION too may rue the day  
With *Volunteer* at strife,  
Who kick'd and cuff'd him on the quay,  
For tampering with his wife.

The deeds erewhile of their compeers  
I could alike unveil;  
But now in pity spare their fears;  
The time supplies my tale. . . .

The prompter rang, the curtain rose,  
The actors plied their parts:  
But nothing could content the Beaux,  
For rancour fill'd their hearts.

Effsoons

Eftfoons they heard the beaten drum,  
And, wonderful to fay!  
Anon they felt their courage come;  
But mischief mark'd its way.

SLIEVE-BRAZEN fightly, large and strong,  
BELANNA's dear delight,  
And CRUSKEEN-BORB of froward tongue,<sup>o</sup>  
But stomach small for fight;

With feven more, robuft and tall,  
Train'd Warriours from their birth,  
Becaufe a stranger to them all,  
Conspire to murder WORTH.

For WORTH was the young Merchant's name,  
And doubly 'twas his right;  
Thofe recreants prov'd it to their fhame,  
When they provok'd his might.

In vengeful dudgeon forth they ftroll'd,  
And rak'd the box-room fire,  
Left haply, fhould their wrath catch cold,  
Their valour might expire.

With direful threatenings high in oath,  
Each chieftain feiz'd his poft,  
And, as becomes the martial cloth,  
Each feems himfelf a hoft.

Away,



Away, away, thou reckless 'squire !  
 Away, devoted groom !  
 Who dares oppose them in their ire,  
 Too surely tempts his doom.

Soon WORTH appear'd, the hostile crew,  
 A desperate band, I trow,  
 With naked swords all at him flew,  
 Resolv'd to lay him low.

SLIEVE-BRAZEN, like a frantic scold  
 Amidst her brawling crones,  
 First on his collar laid fast hold,  
 And swore he'd break his bones.

To give his stern bravado weight,  
 He stoutly stamp'd the board,  
 And in his face he bolted straight  
 The pummel of his sword.

This was by concert signal made  
 The onset to begin,  
 Which on the instant all obey'd,  
 And closely hemm'd him in.

Ah! woe is me! there's no resource,  
 And here thy days must end!  
 For sure 'gainst such united force,  
 'Twere bootless to contend.

With

With oaken stick, scarce worth a groat,  
He kept them all at bay,  
And quickly to confusion brought  
The authors of the fray.

SLIEVE-BRAZEN, . . . thwack! . . . a broken head! . . .  
In doleful plight was he!  
Sir CRUSKEEN-BORB roar'd out, he's dead!  
And crouch'd upon his knee.

The prostrate leader's hand he took,  
Belike to breathe a vein;  
But pausing . . . shot at WORTH a look,  
And started up again.

'Twas then his heart-string Honour pinch'd,  
A cord she seldom touch'd;  
His trusty whinyard never flinch'd,  
And firm the hilt he clutch'd.

Yield thee, vile caitiff! fierce he cries,  
Or this decides thy fate;  
Vain hope!—a chop betwixt his eyes  
Consign'd him to the grate.

His harder hap I needs must tell,  
Ye courtly blades beware!  
The ruthless embers on him fell,  
And burnt his well-dress'd hair!

There

There lies he as presumption should;  
 Revenge O'BROGUS vow'd,  
 As near his smouldring curls he stood,  
 Wrapt in a favoury cloud.

Such screens by hands celestial spread,  
 Might knights of old defend;  
 But those convenient times are fled,  
 No Goddes proves his friend.

Ripe from the stews the war to wage  
 O'BROGUS fought renown;  
 DOLL PAIRMAIN cross'd him in his rage;  
 He knock'd DOLL PAIRMAIN down.

Poor DOLL fet up a hideous squall!  
 O'BROGUS was so vext!  
 The Belles made from him, Beaux and all,  
 Concluding their turn next.

But soon (pot-valiant now no more)  
 He wails a streaming snout;  
 As tho' the bumpers quaff'd before  
 Deserted that way out.

Two Blades in buff his place supplied,  
 And hot the contest grew;  
 The Youth, with justice on his side,  
 Soon cool'd their courage too.

Beneath a lady's arm entrench'd,  
 One bravely tilts a poke;  
 But from his gripe the cheese-fork wrench'd,  
 WORTH with his sapling broke.

Behind him One, all blanch'd with fear,  
 Prepares a mortal thrust;  
 His left hand timely gain'd his ear,  
 And fell'd him to the dust.

With brandish'd faulchion, gleaming bright,  
 Another brav'd the list;  
 Plumb in the mark, as swift as light,  
 WORTH darts his manly fist.

Like the chaf'd surge he forms his trunk;  
 Down dropt the guiltless steel,  
 And sickening fore, like gin-swill'd punk,  
 He to and fro did reel.

On all around, stand or retreat,  
 WORTH dealt with peerless skill,  
 And down he laid them at his feet,  
 Like sacks upon the mill.

O stain to arms! FITZMINION then,  
 Shock'd at the fight, did scream;  
 Assert your place in beauty's ken,  
 And your lost fame redeem,

Had



Had BUCKINGHAM not quit the land,  
Or WESTMORELAND appear'd,  
Accounts against you so to stand,  
You must be all cashier'd.<sup>a</sup>

The words had scarce a passage found  
From out his quivering lips,  
When WORTH, to face him wheeling round,  
The musky Major trips.

Oh! I am hurt! he piteous cried!  
My friends! be witness all!  
But what more deeply hurts my pride,  
The Merchant sees me fall.

And many were the lookers on,  
Who well his drift might read;  
But to redress him ran not one,  
For all approv'd the deed.

The vanquish'd Knights, if 'twould avail,  
I could by name record;  
But that would little grace my tale;  
They had their just reward.

Their foul defeat, of all the corps,  
Escap'd there none to tell;  
Save one, who sculk'd behind the door,  
Discover'd by the smell.

This

This doughty fwordfman well, I ween,  
 Could wield his Knife and Fork;  
 A fungus, puff'd with pride and spleen,  
 Sprung from the jakes of Cork.

The strife near twenty minutes coft,  
 Ere WORTH got time to breathe;  
 And now in generous pity loft,  
 He looks on thofe beneath.

Tho' match'd againft fuch fearful odds,  
 His life and fame at ftake;  
 To fee them like a heap of clods,  
 His very heart did ake.

Why would you fo, with grief he cried,  
 Expose a foldier's name?  
 I almoft rather would have died,  
 Than tarnifh you with fhame.

The Girls on red-coats wont to doat,  
 Perceiving now they err'd,.  
 Struck with amazement! chang'd their note,  
 And WORTH, fweet fouls! preferr'd.

So home he went with laurels deck'd;  
 His foes beftrew'd the field:  
 Thus Virtue's fons obtain refpect,  
 And courage is their fhield.

The

The Nine, repriev'd for future fate,  
 'Gainst WORTH sneak'd off to swear,<sup>9</sup>  
 And each display'd his reeking pate,  
 Which made the Justice stare!!!

Good lack! good lack! his Worship cried,  
 Thus pride must have a fall!  
 Can honour be to WORTH denied,  
 That fingly fac'd you all!

I'll not distrefs the brave young Man  
 With warrants and so forth;  
 Go home, and do the best you can  
 To make it up with WORTH.

God save the King and Justice too,  
 And let good sense increase,  
 That drefs'd in scarlet, green or blue,  
 We may see shows in peace.

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E P I G R A M.

*Μέγα Βιβλίον, Μέγα Κακόν.*

**GREAT** Books, Great Books, Sir! are great evils:  
 And what are Pamphlets? . . . Little Devils.

NOTES

## NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

<sup>1</sup> IN SPRANGER's *Booth*.—The Theatre Royal, Crow-street, Dublin, built by *Spranger Barry*, Esq.

<sup>2</sup> *From Alexander, Philip's Son,* } This will questionless be understood in a qualified sense, *To Alexander Clarke.* } purely as a poetical designation of time, to which terms more strictly chronological could not so well be appropriated. . . . *All-legs-under Clarke* was the original Reading; but, though supported by classical authority, on mature deliberation, the more usual appellative was preferred; as it obviates misconstructions; accords better with its correlative in the preceding verse, and affords a plausible presumption that, where Alexander the Great is of the Party, there can be no reasonable complaint on the footing of Company. Besides the appearance of a Pun in so serious a composition, . . . an Epic Poem forsooth! . . . might justly give offence to Readers of a certain description, who mightily value themselves on verbal precision and delicacy of taste. Philologers of such refinement, to speak of them suitably to their genius and talents, have otherguess notions of the Bagatelle than are recorded of one Swift, 'a very shallow fellow,'\* whom possibly they may have heard of tho' never matriculated in his Academy, where the *ARS PUNNANDI*, was a favourite study, and often superseded *Smeglesius*, *Keckermannus*, *Burgerfducius*, and indeed the whole phalanx of Logicians, for ages past the pride and bulwark of the Schools. He wrote a Book too called the *Draper's Letters*, a pretty tolerable performance for those days, and, save *Watson's Almanack*, the most popular that ever issued from the Irish Press. To his pen also the Critics ascribe the *History of the Yahoos*, a grave and good sort of people, bitter enemies to punning, a science in which that author, as all his cotemporaries affirm, was a notable proficient, and not only honoured it in his own practice, but encouraged the exercise of it in others, inasmuch that he is said to have made it in some degree a point in the selection of his associates, and particular intimates at the Deanery; few of whom, if there be faith in *Chronicles*, were remarkable for obtuseness of understanding, or poverty of wit.

The same Swift was in other respects likewise a promoter of arts. He built an Hospital, or College rather, for Professors of

\* See *Sheridan's Life of Dean Swift*, 8vo. Lond. 1784, p. 449.



of a peculiar cast, and liberally provided for its support by an endowment in perpetuity, out of his own private fortune, which, however inadequate to the urgency of the times, argues no doubt the necessity of the Institution and a very laudable share of public spirit in the founder. One of his friends, another Alexander, not the copper-smith,† has left a celebrated Essay behind him, where those whom it may concern, may find the qualifications for admission summarily comprised in a single distich.

Some have at first for Wits, then Poets past,  
Turn'd Criticks next, and prov'd plain Fools at last.

What a lamentable thing it is, we every where meet with such numbers of promising Candidates! . . . The Rooms are full.

<sup>3</sup> *At Hexham's mimic fight.*—The Battle of Hexham, a dramatic Piece by G. Colman, Esq. acted that memorable evening.

<sup>4</sup> *Dee's frighted shores.*—The City of Chester stands on the Banks of the River *Dee*, which incloses it on the south and west.

<sup>5</sup> *Nor shall thy meed in OSTMEN'S TOWN.*—*Dublin*, so called from the *Ostmen* or Danes, its original inhabitants.

<sup>6</sup> *And CRUSKEEN-BORB.*—*Borb*, in English, *fierce*; a fine patronymic affix! luckily characterising this complicated hero, at once the Ajax and Therites of the piece.

<sup>7</sup> *Plumb in the mark.*—*Mark*, a technical term in the *Mendozan* school, by which is meant the pit of the stomach.

<sup>8</sup> *You must be all cashier'd.*—This Stanza points out the precise æra of the transaction, which happened during the interregnum that took place, anno 1789, and probably has some secret reference, as usual with our author, to collateral occurrences. An astonishing crash about the same time happened among the minor financiers in the public offices, whose extensive manors, elegant villas, superb palaces, and splendid domestic arrangements, occasioned surmises that all was not fairly come by. Unfortunately our active Chief Governor had a turn for accounts. Their books were called for . . . Many of those provident gentry were displaced; some embraced voluntary exile, and some, it was whispered, went self-devoted to the grave. But they were eventually revenged. The agents of speculation bestirred

† Alluding, it may be supposed, to one Alexander Woods, notorious for uttering bad Half-pence, a species of punning not at all in Swift's manner, and as he was in no shape an encourager of Raps, amongst other laudable endeavours to suppress them, he took occasion to preach a Sermon from 2 Tim. ch. iv. v. 14, decidedly levelled at Woods.

bestirred themselves; popular clamour was wrought upon: His numerical Excellency was recalled, and that very Viceroy, who but a few months before, on his arrival at the seat of Government, saw the windows in every quarter illuminated, and had his carriage drawn in triumph thro' the streets, with the horses taken off, by the crowding populace amidst universal acclamations, was obliged to steal off at a back-door, and make the best of his way thro' bye-lanes and alleys to screen himself from outrage . . . One of the defaulters, whose appointment did not exceed 60l. annually, on being declared bankrupt, had claims proved against him by private individuals to the amount of one hundred and sixty three thousand pounds . . . 163,000l. !!! . . . *ex pede Herculem*. . . Who after such a specimen can listen to grumblers making poor mouths, or tax the good people of Dublin with incredulity?!

<sup>9</sup> *'Gainst WORTH sneak'd off to swear.*—This singular circumstance, however extraordinary, is a fact, modestly omitted by Mr. *Worth* in his narrative prefixed, and with equal modesty and reserve he touches upon other particulars, detailed in this ballad as they really happened. He was next morning apprized of their application to the Justice, and by advice of his friends, as a matter of self-defence, tendered *his* examinations, which were admitted, and the affair is at the present writing *sub judice*.—The matter has been since determined in the Court of King's Bench, with exemplary costs in favour of *WORTH*.

